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THE ALDINE EDITION OF THE BRITISH POETS

THE POEMS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER

IN SIX VOLUMES

VOL III

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THE POETICAL WORKS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER

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THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE FRANKELEYNES PROLOGE.

IN faith, Squier, thou hast the wel y-quit
And gentilly, I preise wel thy wit,'
Quod the Frankeleyn, 'considering thin youthe,
So felingly thou spekest, sire, I alowe the,
As to my dome, ther is non that is here,
Of eloquence that schal be thy pere,
If that thou live; God geve thee goode chaunce,
And in vertue send the continuaunce,
For of thy speking I have gret deinté.
I have a sone, and by the Trinité
It were me lever than twenty pound worth lond,
Though it right now were fallen in myn hond,
He were a man of swich discretion,
As that ye ben; fie on possession,
But-if a man be vertuous withal!
I have my sone snibbed, and yet shal,
For he to vertue listeth not to entende,
But for to play at dis, and to dispende,

And lese al that he hath, is his usage;
And he had lever talken with a page,
Than to commune with any gentil wight,
Ther he might leren gentillesse aright.'

'Straw for your gentillesse!' quod our hoste.
'What? Frankeleyn, pardé, sire, wel thou wost,
That eche of you mote tellen at the leste
A tale or two, or breken his beheste.'
'That know I wel, sire,' quod the Frankeleyn,
'I pray you haveth me not in disdein,
Though I to this man speke a word or two.'
'Telle on thy tale, withouten wordes mo.'
'Gladly, sire hoste,' quod he, 'I wol obeye
Unto your wille; now herkeneth what I seye;
I wol you not contrarien in no wise,
As fer as that my wittes may suffice.
I pray to God that it may plesen yow,
Than wot I wel that it is good y-now.'

THE FRANKELEYNES PROLOGE.

THIS olde gentile Britouns in here dayes
Of diverse aventures maden layes,
Rymeden in here firste Britoun tonge;
Whiche layes with here instrumentzs they songe,
Other elles redden hem for here plesaunce,
And on of hem have I in remembraunce,
Which I schal seye with as goode wille as I can.
But, sires, bycause that I am a burel man,
At my begynnyng first I you beseche
Haveth me excused of my rude speche,
I lerned never rethorik certayn;
Thing that I speke, it mot be bare and playn;
I slepte never on the mount of Pernaso,
Ne lered never Marcus, Thullius, ne Cithero.
Colours of Rethorik knowe I non, withouten drede,
But suche coloures as growen in the mede,
Or elles suche as men dye with or peynte;
Colours of rethorik ben me to queynte;
My spyrit feleth nought of suche matere.
But if ye luste my tale schyl ye nouthe here.'

THE FRANKELEYNES TALE.

THER was a knight, that loved and did his peyne
In Armoryke, that cleped is Briteyne,
To serven a lady in his beste wise;
And many a labour, and many a grete emprise
He for his lady wrought, er sche were wonne;
For sche was on the fairest under sonne,
And eek therto come of so heih kynrede,
That wel unnethes durst this knight for drede
Telle hire his woo, his peyne, and his distresse.
But atte laste sche for his worthinesse,
And namely for his meke obeissance,
Hath suche a pité caught of his penaunce,
That prively sche felle of his acord
To take him for hir housbonde and hire lord,
(Of suche lordschipe as men han over here wyves);
And, for to lede the more in blisse here lyves,
Of his fre wille he swor hire as a knight,
That never in his wille by day ne by night
Ne schulde he upon him take no maystrie
Ayeins hire wille, ne kuythe hire jalousye,
But hire obeye, and folwe hire wille in al,
As ony lovere to his lady schal;
Save that the name of sovereyneté
That wolde he han for schame of his degre.
Sche thanketh him, and with ful grete humblesse
Sche sayde; 'Sire, seththen of your gentilnesse
Ye profre me to han *als* large a reyne,

Ne wold nevere God betwixe us tweyne,
As in my gilt, were eyther werre or stryf.
Sire, I wil be your *owne* humble trewe wijf,
Have here my trouthe, til that myn herte breste.'
Thus be they bothe in quiete and in reste.
For o thing, syres, saufly dar I seye,
That frendes everich other motte obeye,
If thay wille longe holde companye
Love wol nought ben constreigned by maystrie.
Whan maystrie cometh, the god of love anon
Beteth on his wynges, and fare wel, he is gon.
Love is a thing, as any spiryt, fre.
Wommen of kynde desiren liberté,
And nought to be constreigned as a thral;
And so do men, if I the sothe seye schal.
Loke who that is most pacient in love,
He is at his avauntage *al* above.
Pacience is an heih vertue certeyn,
For it venquissheth, as these clerkes seyn,
Thynges that rigour schulde never atteigne.
For every word men may nought chyde ne pleyne.
Lerneth to suffre, or elles, so mote I gon,
Ye schullen it lerne whether ye wole or non.
For in this worlde certeyn no wight *ther* nys,
That he ne doth or saith som tyme amys.
Ire othir siknesse, other constillacioun,
Wyn, wo, or chaungynge of complexioun,
Causeth ful often to don amys other speken.
On every wrong men may nought ben awreken;
After the tyme moste be temperaunce
To every wight that can *of* governance.
And therfore hath this worthy wise knight
To lyve in ese suffraunce hir behight;

And sche to him ful wisly gan to swere,
That never schulde ther be defaute in here.
Here may men sen an humble wyse acord;
Thus hath sche take hire servaunt and hire lorde,
Servaunt in love, and lord in mariage.
Than was he bothe in lordschipe and servage!
Servage? nay, but in lordschipe *al* above,
Sethyns that he hath bothe his lady and his love;
His lady certes, and his wyf also,
The whiche that lawe of love accordeth therto.
And whan he was in this prosperité,
Home with his wyf he goth to his cuntre,
Nought fer fro Pe*n*mark; ther as his dwellyng was,
Wher as he lyveth in blisse and in solas.
Who couthe telle, but he hadde wedded be,
The joy, the ese, and the prosperité,
That is bitwixe, an housebond and his wyf?
A yeer and more lasteth this blissful liif,
Til that this knight, of which I spak of thus,
That of kynrede was cleped Arveragus,
Schope him to gon and dwelle a yeer or tweyne
In Engelond, that cleped eek was Bretayne,
To seche in armes worschipe and eek honour,
(For all his lust he sette in such labour;)
And dwelleth there *two yeer;* the boke saith thus.
Now wil I stynte of this Arviragus,
And speken I wole of Dorygen his wijf,
That loveth hir husbonde as hire hertes lyf.
And for his absens wepeth sche and siketh,
As don these noble wyves whan hem liketh;
Sche mourneth, waketh, wayleth, fasteth, pleyneth;
Desire of his presence hire so destreyneth,

That al this wyde world sche sette at nought.
Hire freendes, which that knewe hir hevy thought,
Conforted hire in al that ever they mighte or may;
They prechen hire, thay tellen hire night and day,
That causeles sche sleeth hire self allas!
And every confort possible in this cas
They don to hire, with all here busynes,
And all to make hire lete hire hevynesse.
By processe as ye knowe wel everychon,
Men may so longe graven in the ston,
Til som figure therinne *em*prentyd be;
So longe han they conforted hire, that sche
Receyved hath, by hope and by resoun,
The empryntynge of hire consollacioun.
Thurgh which hire grete sorwe gan aswage;
Sche may nought alway endure in such rage.
And eek Arveragus, in al this care,
Hath sent his lettres home *of* his *wel*-fare,
And that he wolde come hastly ayayn,
Other *elles* hadde this sorwe hire herte slayn.
Hire frendes sawe hire herte gan to slake,
And preyed hire on knees, for Goddes sake,
To come and rome in here companye,
Away to dryve hire derke fantasye;
And fynally sche graunted that requeste,
For wel sche sawe *that* it was for the best.
Now stood hire castel faste by the see,
And often with hire freendes walked sche,
Hire to disporte on the banke on heih,
Wher as sche many schippes and barges seih,
Seylinge here cours, where *as* hem luste to go.
But yit was there a parcelle of hir wo,
For to hir self ful often, seyde sche,

· Is ther no schipp, of so many as I se,
Wole brynge home my lord? than wolde myn herte
Al waryssche of this bitter peynes smerte.'
Another tyme ther wolde sche sitte and thinke,
And caste hire eyen dounward fro the brynke;
But whan sche saugh the grisly rokkes blake,
For verray fere so wolde hire herte quake,
That on hire feet sche mighte nought hire sustene.
Thenne wolde sche sitte adoun upon the grene,
And pitously into the see byholde,
And sayn right thus, with sorowful *sikes* colde.
'Eterne God, that thurgh thy purvuyaunce
Ledest the world by certein governaunce,
In ydelnesse, as men sayn ye nothinge make.
But, Lord, these grisely feendly rokkes blake,
That semen rather a foul confusioun
Of werk, then any fayr creacioun
Of *su*che a parfyt God and a stable,
Why han ye wrought this werk unresonable?
For by this werke, south, north, est, and west,
Ther nys y-fostred man, ne bryd, ne best;
Hit doth no good, to my witt, but annoyeth.
Se ye nought, Lorde, how mankynde it destroyeth?
An hundred thousand bodyes of mankynde
Han rokkes slayn, al be they nought in mynde;
Which mankynde is *so* fair part of thy werk,
That thou it madest ylike to thin hond werk,
Thenne semed it, ye hadde a gret chierte
Toward mankynde; but how than may it be,
That ye suche menys make it to distroyen?
Whiche menys doth no good, but ever annoyen.
I wot wel, clerkes woln sayn as hem leste,
By argumentz, that al thing is for the beste,

Though I ne can the causes for sothe knowe;
But thilke God that made *the* wynde to blowe,
As kepe my lord, this is my conclusioun;
To clerkes lete I al disputacioun;
But wolde God, that al the rokkes blake
Were sonken into helle for his sake!
These rokkes sleen myn herte for feere.'
Thus wolde sche sayn with many a pitous teere.
Hire freendes sawe that *it* nas no disport
To romen by the see, but discomfort,
And schopen for to pleyen somwhere elles.
They leden hire by ryveres and by welles,
And eek in other places delitables;
They daunce and playe at chesse and at tables.
So on a day, right in the morwe tyde,
Unto a gardyne that was right there besyde,
In which that thay hadde made here ordinaunce
Of vitaile, and of other purvyaunce,
They gon and pleyen hem al the longe day;
And this was on the sixte morwe of May,
Which May hadde peynted with his softe schoures
This gardyn ful of leves and of floures:
And with crafte of mannes hande so curiously
Arayed hath this gardyn trewelly,
That never nas ther gardyn of such prys,
But if it were the verrey paradys.
The odure of floures and the freisshe sight,
Wolde han made ony pensyf herte light
That ever was born, but if to gret siknesse
Other to gret sorwe hyld it in distresse,
And after dynere gan they to daunce,
So ful it was of beaute with plesaunce,
And synge also, but Dorigen *song* alone.

Sche made alwey hire compleynt and hire mone,
For sche ne saugh him on the daunce go,
That was hire housbond, and hir love also;
But natheles sche moste a tyme abyde,
And with good hope sche let hir sorwe glyde.
Upon this daunce, amonges other men,
Daunced a squier biforen Dorigen,
That freisscher was and jolyer of array,
As to my dome, than is the monthe of May.
He syngeth and daunceth passyng any man,
That is or was sithenes this world bygan;
Therwith he was, if men schulde him discryve,
On *of* the beste farynge man on lyve,
Yong, strong, ryht vertuous, riche, and wys,
And wel biloved, and holden in gret prys.
And schortliche, if the soth telle I schal,
Unwytyng of this Dorigen at al,
This lusty squyer, servaunt to Venus,
Which that y-cleped was Aurelius,
Had loved hire best of eny creature
Tuo yeer and more, as was his adventure;
But never durste he telle hire of his grevaunce,
Withoute cuppe he drank al his penaunce.
He was dispeyred, nothing durst he seye,
Save in his sawes somwhat wolde he wreye
His woo, as in general compleynyng;
He sayde, he lovede and was biloved nothing.
Of suche matiere made he many layes,
Songes, compleigntes, roundeletis, virrelayes;
How that he durste nought his sorwe telle,
That languisshith as fuyr doth in helle;
And deye seyde he moste, as did Ekko
For Narsisus, that durste nought telle hir wo.

In other manere thenne ye here me seye
Ne durst he nought to hire his wo bewreye,
Sauve paraventure som tyme at daunces,
Ther yong folk kepen here observaunces,
Hit may wel be he loked on hire face
In such a wise, as man that asketh grace,
But nothing wiste sche of his entent.
Natheles it happed, er they thennes went,
Bycause that he was hire neyghebour,
And was a man of worschipe and honour,
And hadde knowen him ofte tymes yore,
They felle in speche, *and* ofte more and more
Unto his purpos drowe Aurelius;
And whan he saw his tyme, he sayde thus.
'Madame,' quod he, 'by God, that this world made,
So that I wist it mighte your herte glade,
I wolde that day, that your Arveragus
Went on the see, that I Aurelius
Had went that I schulde never have come ayain;
For wel I woot my servise is in vayn,
My guerdon nys but bersting of myn herte.
Madame, reweth upon my peynes smerte,
For as with a swerd ye may me sle or save.
Her at youre foot God wold that I were grave!
I have as now no more leyser for to seye;
Have mercy on me, swete, or ye wolen do me deye.'
Sche gan to loke upon Aurelius;
'Is this youre wille,' quod sche, 'and say ye thus?
Never erst,' quod sche, 'ne wist I what ye mente,
But now, Aurely, I knowe youre entente.
By thilke God, that yaf me soule and lyf,
Ne schal I never ben untrewe wif
In word ne in werk; as fer as I have wit,

I wole ben his to whom that I am knyt.'
But after that in pley thus seyde sche:
'Take this for fynal answer as for me.
'Aurelye,' quod sche, 'by hihe God above,
Yit wol I graunte you to be youre love,
(Sethyns I you se so pitously compleyne),
Loke, what day that endelong Bryteyne
Ye remewe alle the rokkes, ston by stoon,
That thay ne lette schip ne boot to goon;
I say, whan ye han maad these costes so clene
Of rokkes, that ther nys no ston y-sene,
Than wol I love yow best of any man,
Have here my trouthe, in al that ever I can.'
'Is ther non other grace *in you?*' quod he.
'No, by that Lord,' quod sche, 'that made me,
For wel I wot that that schal never betyde.
Let such folye out of youre herte glyde.
What deynte schulde man have by his lijf,
For to love another mannes wyf,
That hath hir body whan so that him liketh?'
Aurilius ful ofte sore siketh;
Wo was Aurely whan that he this herde,
And with a sorwful herte he thus answerde.
'Madame,' quod he, 'this were impossible.
Thenne mot I deye on sodeyn deth orrible.'
And with that word he torned him anon.

Tho come hire other frendes many oon,
And in the aleyes romed up and doun,
And nothing wiste of this conclusioun,
But sodeinly began to revel newe,
Til that the brighte sonne had lost his hewe,
For thorisonte had raft the sonne his light,
(This is as moche to say as it was night);

And home they gon in joye and in solas;
Save oonly wrecched Aurelius, allas!
He to his hous is gon with sorwful herte.
He seith, he may not fro his deth asterte.
Him semeth, he felith his herte colde.
Up to the hevene his handes gan he holde,
And on his knees bare he sette him doun,
And in his ravynge sayd his orisoun.
For verray wo out of his witte he breyde,
He nyste nought what he spak, but thus he seyde;
With pitous herte hath he his pleynt bygonne
Unto the goddes and first unto the sonne.
He sayde, 'Apollo, God and governour
Of every plaunte, herbe tre, and flour,
That yevest after thy declinacioun
To ilk of hem his tyme and his sesoun,
As that thin herborwe chaungeth low and heighe;
Lord Phebus, cast thin merciable eyghe
On wrecched Aurely, that am but lorn.
Lo, lord, my lady hath my deth y-sworne
Withouten gilt, but thy benignité
Upon my dedly herte have sum pité.
For wel I wot, lord Phebus, if you leste,
Ye may be helpe, sauve my lady, beste.
Now voucheth sauf, that I may you devyse
How that I may be holpe and in what wyse.
Your blisful suster, Lucina the schene,
That of the see is cheef goddesse and queene;—
Though Neptunus have deyté in the see,
Yit emperesse aboven him is sche;
Ye knowen wel, lord, *that* right as hire desire
Is to be quyked and *lited* of youre fire,
For which sche folweth yow ful besyly,

Right so the see desireth naturelly
To folwen hire, as sche that is goddesse
Bothe in the see and in ryveres more and lesse.
Wherefore lord Phebus, this is myn requeste,
Do this myracle, or I do myn herte to breste;
That thou next at this apposicioun,
Which in the signe schal be of the Leoun,
As preyeth hire so gret a flood to brynge
That five fathome at the leste it overspringe
The hyeste rokke in Armorik Britayne,
And lete this flod endure yeres twayne;
Thenne certes to my lady may I saye,
Holdeth youre hestes, the rokkes ben awaye,
Lord Phebus, do this miracle for me,
Pray hire sche go no faster cours than ye;
I say you thus, pray your suster that sche go
None faster cours than ye this yeres tuo;
Then schal sche be ever at the fulle alway
And springe-flood lasten bothe night and day.
And but sche vouchesauf in such manere
To graunte me my lady soverein dere,
Preye hire to synken every rokke adoun
Into hire owne darke regioun
Under the grounde, ther Pluto duelleth inne,
Other nevermore schal I my lady wynne.
Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot seeke;
Lord Phebus, seeth the teeres on my cheeke,
And of my peyne have *som* compassioun.'
And with that word in swowne he felle adoun,
And longe tyme he lay *forth* in a traunce.
His brother, which that knew of his penaunce,
Up caught him, and to bedde *he hath* him broughte.
Dispeyred in his turment and in his thought,

Lo I this woful creature lete lye,
Chese he for me whether he wol lyve or dye.
Arveragus with hele and gret honour
(As he was of chyvalry the flour)
Is comen home, and othere worthy men.
O, blisful art *thou now*, thou Dorigen,
That hast thin lusty housbonde in thin armes,
The freissche knight, the worthy man of armes,
That loveth the, as his owen hertes lyf;
Nothing luste he to be ymaginatyff,
If any wight hadde spoke, whils he was oute,
To hire of love; he made ther-of no doute;
He nought entendeth to no suche matere,
But daunceth, justith, and maketh good cheere.
And thus in joye and blisse I lete him dwelle,
And of the swete Aurelyus wol I telle.
In langure and in furious turments thus
Tuo yer and more lay wrecche Aurelius,
Er ony foot on erthe he mighte gon;
No comfort in this tyme nade he non,
Sauf of his brother, which that was a clerk.
He knew of al this wo and of al this werk;
For to non other creature certeyn
Of this matiere ne durste he no word seyn;
Under his brest he bar it more secré
Than ever dide Pamphilius for Galathé.
His brest was hole withouten for to sene,
But in his herte ay *was* the arwe kene;
And wel ye knowen that a sore sanure
In surgerie ful perilous is the cure,
But man might touche the arwe or come therby.
His brother wepeth and wayleth privyly,
Til atte last him fel in remembraunce,

That whiles he was at Orlyaunce in Fraunce,
As yonge clerkes, that ben likerous
To reden artes that ben curious,
Seken in every halke and every herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne,
He him remembreth, *that* upon a day,
At Orlyaunce in studye a book he say
Of magique naturel, whiche his felawe,
That was that tyme a bachiler of lawe,
Al were he there to lerne another craft,
Had prively upon his desk y-laft;
This book spak mochil of this operaciouns
Touchynge the xxviii. manciouns
That longen to the mone, and suche folye
As in eure dayes nys nought worth a flye;
For holy chirche saith, in our byleeve,
Ne suffreth non illusioun us to greeve.
And whan this boke was in remembraunce,
Anon for joye his *herte* gan for to daunce,
And to him selve *he* sayde pryvely;
'My brother schal be warisshed hastely;
For I am siker that ther ben sciences,
By whiche men maken dyverse apparences,
Which as the subtile tregetoures pleyen.
For ofte at festes have I herd seyen,
That tregettoures, withinne an halle large,
Han made in come water and a barge,
And in the halle rowen up and doun.
Som tyme hath semed *come* a grym leoun;
Some tyme a castel al of lym and ston,
And whan hem liked voyded it anon;
Thus semed it to every mannes sight.
Now thenne conclude I thus, if that I might

At Orleaunce som olde felaw finde,
That hadde the moones manciouns in mynde,
Othere magik naturel above,
He scholde wel make my brother han his love.
For with *an* apparens a *clerk* may make
To mannes sight, that alle the rokkes blake
Of Britaigne were y-went everychon,
And schippes by the brinke might comen and goon,
And in such forme endure a yeer or tuo
Then were my brother warissched of his wo,
Than most sche needes knowen hire byheste,
Or elles he schal schamen hire at the leste.'
What schulde I make a lenger tale of this?
Unto his brothers bedde comen he is,
And such comfort he yaff him, for to gon
To Orlyaunce, that he up starte anon,
And on his way forth-ward *than* is he fare,
In hope to ben ylissed of his care.
When thay were come almost to that cite,
But if it were a tuo forlong othir thre,
A yong clerk romyng by himself they mette,
Which that in Latyn thriftily hem grette.
And after that he sayde a wonder thing;
'I knowe' quod he, 'the cause of youre comyng.'
And er they forther any foote went,
He told hem alle that was in here entent.
This Brytoun clerk him asked of felawes,
The which that he had knowen in olde dawes;
And he answerde him that they dede were,
For which he wepe ful ofte many a tere.
Doun of his hors Aurelius light anon,
And forth with this magicien forth is he gon
Home to his hous, and made hem wel at ese;

Hem lacked no vitayle that hem might plese.
So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon,
Aurelius in his lyf saugh noon.
He schewed him, er he went to sopere,
Forestes, parkes ful of wild deere.
And how ffaukons han the heron slayne,
Then saw he knightes justen in a playne,
And after this he dide him such plesaunce,
That he him schewed his lady in a daunce,
On which himself he daunced, as him thouht.
And whan this mayster, that this magique wrought,
Sawh it was tyme *he* clapped his hondes tuo,
And, fare wel! al *the* revel is ydo.
And yit remewe they never out of this hous,
Whiles they sawe al this sight merveylous;
But in his study, ther as his bookes be,
They saten stille, and no wight but they thre.
To him his mayster called thanne a squiere,
And seyde him thus 'Is redy oure sopere?
Almost an hour it is, I undertake,
Sethyns I you bad oure souper to make,
Whan that this worthy men wenten with me
Into my study, ther as my bokes be.'
'Sire,' quod this squyer, 'when it lyketh you,
It is al redy, they ye wolen righte now.'
'Go we then soupe,' quod he, 'and for the beste,
These averous folk som tyme mote have reste.
At after souper felle they in treté
What somme schulde this maystres guerdon be,
To remewe all the rokkes of Brytaigne,
And eek fro Gerounay to the mouth of Sayne.
He made it straunge, and swore, so God him save,*
Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde nought have,

Ne gladly for that somme he wolde not goon.
Aurilius with blisful hert anoon
Answerde thus; 'Fy on a thousand pound!
This wyde world, which that men say is round,
I wold it yive, if I were lord of it.
This bargeyn is ful dryve, for we ben knyt;
Ye schal be payed trewly by my trouthe.
But loketh now, for necligence or slouthe,
Ye tarie us heer no lenger than to morwe.'
'Nay,' quod this clerk, 'have her my faith to borwe.'
To bed is goon Aurilius whan him leste,
And wel neigh al night he had his reste,
What for his labour, and his hope of blisse,
His woful hert of penaunce had a lisse.
Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,
To Breteign take thei the righte way,
Aurilius, and this magicien bisyde,
And ben descendid ther thay wol abyde;
And this was, as these bookes me remembre,
The colde frosty seisoun of Decembre.
Phebus wax old, and hewed lyk latoun,
That in his hoote declinacioun
Schon as the burned gold, with stremes brighte;
But now in Capricorn adoun he lighte,
Wher as he schon ful pale; I dar wel sayn
The bitter frostes with the sleet and rayn
Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.
Janus sit by the fuyr with double berd,
And drynketh of his bugle horn the wyn;
Biforn him stont the braun of toskid swyn,
And *nowel* crieth every lusty man.
Aurilius, in al that ever he can,
Doth to his maister chier and reverence,

And peyneth him to doon his diligence
To bringen him out of his peynes smerte,
Or with a swerd that he wold slytte his herte.
This subtil clerk such routhe had of this man,
That night and day he spedeth him, that he can,
To wayte a tyme of his conclusioun;
This is to saye, to make illusioun,
By such an apparence of jogelrie,
(I can no termes of astrologie)
That sche and every wight schold wene and saye,
That of Breteygn the rokkes were awaye,
Or elles they sonken were under the grounde.
So atte last he hath a tyme i-founde
To make his japes and his wrecchednesse
Of such a supersticious cursednesse.
His tables Tollitanes forth he broughte
Ful wel corrected, ne ther lakked noughte,
Neither his collect, ne his expans yeeres,
Neither his rootes, ne his other geeres,
As ben his centris, and his argumentis,
And his proporcionels convenientis
For her equaciouns in every thing.
And by his thre speeres in his worching,
He knew ful wel how fer Allnath was schove
Fro the heed of thilk fixe Aries above,
That in the fourthe speere considred is.
Ful subtilly he calkiled al this.
Whan he had founde his first mancioun,
He knew the remenaunt by proporcioun;
And knew the arisyng of this moone wel,
And in whos face, and terme, and every del;
And knew ful wel the moones mancioun
Acordaunt to his operacioun;

And knew also his other observaunces,
For suche illusiouns and suche meschaunces,
As hethen folk used in thilke dayes.
For which no lenger maked he delayes,
But thurgh his magik, for a wike or tweye,
It semede that the rokkes were aweye.
Aurilius, which yet dispayred is
Wher he schal have his love or fare amys,
Awayteth night and day on this miracle;
And whan he knew that ther was noon obstacle,
That voyded were these rokkes everichoon,
Doun to his maistres feet he fel anoon,
And sayd; 'I wrecched woful Aurilius,
Thanke you, lord, and my lady Venus,
That me han holpe fro my cares colde.'
And to the temple his way forth he hath holde,
Wher as he knew he schold his lady se.
And whan he saugh his tyme, anoon right he
With dredful hert and with ful humble cheere
Salued hath his owne lady deere.
'My soverayn lady,' quod this woful man,
'Whom I most drede, and love, as I *best* can,
And lothest were of al this world displese,
Nere it that I for you have such desese,
That I most deye her at youre foot anoon,
Nought wold I telle how me is wo bygoon,
But certes outher most I dye or pleyne;
Ye sleen me gulteles for verrey peyne.
But of my deth though that ye have no routhe,
Avyseth yow, or that ye breke your trouthe;
Repenteth yow for thilke God above,
Or ye me sleen, bycause that I you love.
For, madame, wel ye woot what ye han hight;

Nat that I chalenge eny thing of right
Of yow, my soverayn lady, but youre grace;
But in a gardyn yonde, at such a place,
Ye wot right wel what ye byhighte me,
And in myn hond your trouthe plighte ye,
To love me best; God woot ye sayde so,
Al be that I unworthy am therto;
Madame, I speke it for thonour of yow,
More than to save myn hertes lif right now;
I have do so as ye comaundede me,
And if ye vouchesauf, ye maye go se.
Doth as you list, have youre byheste in mynde,
For quyk or deed, right ther ye schul me fynde;
In yow lith al to do me lyve or deye?
But wel I wot the rokkes ben aweye.'

He taketh his leve, and sche astoned stood;
In alle hir face *ther* nas oon drop of blood;
Sche wende never have be in such a trappe.
'Allas!' quod sche, 'that ever this schulde happe!
For wend I never by possibilité,
That such a monstre or merveyl mighte be;
It is agayns the proces of nature.'
And hom sche goth a sorwful creature,
For verray fere unnethe may sche go.
Sche wepeth, wayleth al a day or tuo,
And swowneth, that it routhe was to see;
But why it was, to no wight tolde sche,
For out of toune was goon Arvegarius.
But to hir self sche spak, and sayde thus,
With face pale, and with ful sorwful chiere,
In hir compleignt, as ye schul after hiere.

'Allas!' quod sche, 'on the, Fortune, I pleyne,
That unwar wrapped me hast in thy cheyne,

Fro which tescape, woot I no socour,
Save oonly deth, or elles dishonour;
Oon of these tuo bihoveth me to chese.
But natheles, yet have I lever leese
My lif, than of my body to have schame,
Or knowe my-selve fals, or lese my name;
And with my deth I may be quyt, i-wys.
Hath ther not many a noble wyf, er this,
And many a mayden, slayn hir-self, allas!
Rather than with her body doon trespas?
Yis certeynly; lo, stories beren witnes.
Whan thritty tirauntz ful of cursednes
Hadde slayn Phidon in Athenes atte feste,
Thay comaunded his doughtres to areste,
And bryngen hem biforn hem in despit
Al naked, to fulfille her foule delyt;
And in her fadres blood they made hem daunce
Upon the pavyment, God yeve hem meschaunce.
For which these woful maydens, ful of drede,
Rather than they wolde lese her maydenhede,
They prively ben stert into a welle,
And drenched hem-selfen, as the bookes telle.
'They of Mecene leet enquere and seeke
Of Lacidomye fifty maydenes eeke,
On which thay wolden doon her leccherie;
But was ther noon of al that companye
That sche nas slayn, and with a good entente
Ches rather for to deye, than to assente
To ben oppressed of hir maydenhede.
Why schuld I than to deye ben in drede?
'Lo eek the tyraunt Aristoclides,
That loved a mayden heet Stimphalides,
Whan that hir father slayn was on a night,

Unto Dyanes temple goth sche right,
And hent the ymage in hir hondes tuo,
Fro which ymage wolde sche never go,
No wight might of hit hir hondes arace,
Til sche was slayn right in the selve place.
Now sith that maydens hadde such despit
To ben defouled with mannes foul delit,
Wel aught a wyf rather hir-self to sle,
Than be defouled, as it thenketh me.

'What schal I seyn of Hasdrubaldes wyf,
That at Cartage byraft hir-self the lyf?
For whan sche saugh that Romayns wan the toun,
Sche took hir children alle, and skipte adoun
Into the fuyr, and ches rather to deye,
Than eny Romayn dide hir vilonye.

'Hath nought Lucresse slayn hir-self, allas!
At Rome, whanne sche oppressid was
Of Tarquyn? for hir thought it was a schame
To lyven, whan sche hadde lost hir name.

'The seven maydens of Milisie also
Han slayn hemself for verray drede and wo,
Rather than folk of Gawle hem schulde oppresse.
Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,
Couthe I now telle as touching this matiere.

'Whan Habradace was slayn, his wif so deere
Hir-selven slough, and leet hir blood to glyde
In Habradaces woundes, deepe and wyde;
And seyde, my body atte leste way
Ther schal no wight defoulen, if I may.
What schold I mo ensamples herof sayn?
Seththen so many han hem-selven slayn
Wel rather than they wolde defouled be,
I wol conclude that it is best for me

To slen myself than be defouled thus.
I wol be trewe unto Arvegarius,
Or rather sle myself in som manere,
As dede Democionis doughter deere.
Bycause sche wolde nought defouled be.
O Cedasus, it is ful gret pité
To reden how thy doughteren dyed, allas!
That slowe hemself for suche maner caas.
As gret a pité was it or wel more,
The Theban mayden, that for Nichonore
Hir-selven slough, right for such maner wo.
Another Theban mayden dede right so,
For oon of Macidone had hir oppressed,
Sche with deth hire maydenhede redressed.
What schal I sayn of Niceratis wif,
That for such caas biraft hirself hir lyf?
How trewe eek was to Alcebiades
His love, that rather *for* to dyen ches,
Than for to suffre his body unburied be?
Lo, which a wif was Alceste?' quod sche,
'What saith Omer of good Penolopé?
Al Grece knoweth of hir chastité.
Pardi, of Laodomya is writen thus,
That whan *at* Troye was *slayn* Protheselaus,
No lenger wol sche lyve after his day.
The same of noble Porcia telle I may;
Withoute Brut*us* kynde sche myght not lyve,
To whom sche had al hool hir herte yyve,
The parfyt wyfhod of Artemesye
Honoured is thurgh al the Barbarie.
O Theu*ta* queen, thy wifly chastité
To alle wyves may a mirour be.'
Thus playned*e* Dorigen a day or tweye,

Purposyng ever that sche wolde deye;
But natheles upon the thridde night
Hom cam Arveragus, the worthy knight,
And asked hir why that sche wepte so sore;
And sche gan wepe ever lenger the more.
'Allas!' quod sche, 'that ever was I born!
Thus have I sayd,' quod sche, 'thus have I sworn;'
And told him al, as ye han herd bifore;
It nedeth nought reherse it you no more.
This housbond with glad chiere in good wise
Answerd and sayde, as I schal you devyse.
'Is ther aught elles, Dorigen, but this?'
'Nay, nay,' quod sche, 'God me so rede and wis,
This is to moche, and it were Goddes wille.'
'Ye, wyf,' quod he, 'let slepe that may be stille,
It may be wel peraunter yet to day,
Ye schal your trouthe holden, by my fay.
For God so wisly have mercy on me,
I hadde wel lever i-stekid for to be,
For verray love which *that* I to you have,
But-if ye scholde your trouthe kepe and save.
Trouthe is the heighest thing that men may kepe.'
But with that word he gan anoon to wepe,
And sayde, 'I yow forbede up peyne of deth,
That never whil the lasteth lyf or breth,
To no wight telle thou of this aventure.
As I may best I wil my woo endure.
Ne make no contenaunce of hevynesse,
That folk of you may deme harm or gesse.'
And forth he cleped a squyer and a mayde.
'Go forth anoon with Dorigen,' he sayde,
'And bryngeth hir to such a place anoon.'
Thay take her leve, and on her wey they gon;

But thay ne wiste why sche thider wente,
He nolde no wight tellen his entente.
This squyer, which that hight Aurelius,
On Dorigen that was so amerous,
Of adventure happed hire to mete
Amyd the toun, right in the quyke strete;
As sche was boun to goon the wey forth-right
Toward the gardyn, ther as sche had hight.
And he was to the gardyn-ward also;
For wel he spyede whan sche wolde go
Out of hir hous, to eny maner place.
But thus thay mette of adventure or grace,
And he salueth hir with glad entente,
And askith hire whider-ward sche wente.
And sche answered, half as sche were mad,
'Unto the gardyn, as myn housbond bad,
My trouthe for to holde, allas! allas!'
Aurilius gan wondren on this caas,
And in his hert hadde gret compassioun
Of hire, and of hir lamentacioun,
And of Arveragus the worthy knight,
That bad hir hold al that sche hadde hight,
So loth him was his wif schuld breke hir trouthe.
And in his hert he caught of this gret routhe,
Consideryng the best on every syde,
That fro his lust yet were him lever abyde,
Than doon so high a cheerlissch wrecchednesse
Agayns fraunchis of alle gentilesce,
For which in fewe wordes sayd he thus.
'Madame, saith to your lord Arveragus,
That sith I se his grete gentilesse
To you, and eek I se wel your distresse,
That him were lever have schame (and that were routhe)

Than ye to me schulde breke youre trouthe,
I have wel lever ever to suffre woo,
Than I departe the love bytwix yow tuo.
I yow relesse, madame, into your hond
Quyt every seurement and every bond
That ye han maad to me as herbiforn,
Sith thilke tyme which that ye were born.
My trouthe I plight, I schal yow never repreve
Of no byhest, and her I take my leve,
As of the trewest and the beste wif
That ever yit I knew in al my lyf.
But every wyf be war of hir byhest,
On Dorigen remembreth atte lest.
Thus can a squyer doon a gentil dede,
As wel as can a knyght, withouten drede.'
  Sche thanketh him upon hir knees al bare,
And hoom unto hir housbond is sche fare,
And told him al, as ye han herd me sayd;
And, be ye siker, he was so wel apayd,
That it were impossible me to write.
What schuld I lenger of this caas endite?
Arveragus and Dorigen his wif
In sovereyn blisse leden forth here lyf,
Never eft ne was ther anger hem bytwen;
He cherisscheth hir as though sche were a queen,
And sche was to him trewe for evermore;
Of these tuo folk ye gete of me nomore.
  Aurilius, that his cost hath al forlorn,
Curseth the tyme that ever he was born.
'Allas!' quod he, 'allas, that I byhighte
Of pured gold a thousand pound of wighte
Unto this philosophre! how schal I doo?
I se no more, but that I am for-doo.

Myn heritage moot I needes selle,
And ben a begger, her may I not duelle,
And schamen al my kynrede in this place,
But I of him may gete better grace.
But natheles I wol of him assaye
At certeyn dayes yeer by yer to paye,
And thanke him of his grete curtesye.
My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol noght lye.'
With herte soor he goth unto his cofre,
And broughte gold unto this philosophre,
The value of fyf hundred pound, I gesse,
And him bysecheth of his gentilesce
To graunte him dayes of the remenaunt;
And sayde, 'Maister, I dar wel make avaunt,
I fayled never of my trouthe as yit.
For sikerly my dettes schal be quyt
Towardes yow, how so that ever I fare
To goon a beggere in my kurtil bare;
But wolde ye vouchesauf upon seurté
Tuo yer or thre for to respite me,
Than were I wel, for elles most I selle
Myn heritage, ther is nomore to telle.'

This philosophre sobrely answerde,
And seyde thus, whan he these wordes herde;
'Have I not holden covenaunt unto the?'
'Yis certes, wel and trewely,' quod he.
'Hastow nought had thy lady as the liketh?'
'No, no,' quod he, and sorwfully he siketh.
'What was the cause? tel me, if thou can.'
Aurilius his tale anoon bygan,
And told him al as ye han herd bifore,
It needeth nat to you reherse it more.
He sayde, Arveragus of gentilesse

Had lever dye in sorwe and in distresse,
Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe fals.
The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde him als,
How loth hir was to ben a wykked wyf,
And that sche lever had han lost hir lyf;
And that hir trouthe sche swor thurgh innocence;
Sche never erst hadde herd speke of apparence;
'That made me han of her so gret pyté.
And right *as frely as he* sente hir to me,
As frely sent I hir to him agayn.
This is al and som, ther is no more to sayn.'
The philosopher answerde, 'Leve brother,
Everich of yow dede gentilly to other;
Thow art a squyer, and he is a knight,
But God forbede, for his blisful might,
But-if a clerk couthe doon as gentil dede
As wel as eny of you, it is no drede.
Sire, I relesse the thy thousond pound,
As thou right now were crope out of the ground,
Ne never er now ne haddest knowen me.
For, sire, I wil not take a peny of the
For al my craft, ne nought for my travayle;
Thou hast y-payed wel for my vitayle.
It is ynough, and far wel, have good day.'
And took his hors, and forth he goth his way.
Lordynges, this questioun wolde I axe now,
Which was the moste free, as thinketh yow?
Now telleth me, or that I ferther wende.
I can no more, my tale is at an ende.

THE SECOUNDE NONNES TALE.

THE minister and the norice unto vices,
Which that men clepe in Englisch ydelnesse,
The porter at the gates is of delicis;
To eschiewe, and by her contrary hire oppresse,
That is to saye, by leful besynesse,
Wel oughte we to do al oure entente,
Lest that the fend thurgh ydelnesse us hente.
For he that with his thousand cordes slye
Continuelly us wayteth to byclappe,
Whan he may man in ydelnes espye,
He can so lightly cacche him in his trappe,
Til that a man be hent right by the lappe,
He is nought war the fend hath him in honde;
Wel oughte we wirche, and ydelnes witstonde.
And though men dredde never for to deye,
Yet seen men wel by resoun douteles,
That ydelnes is roten sloggardye,
Of which ther cometh never good encres;
And sin that slouth her holdeth in a lees,
Oonly to sleep, and for to ete and drynke,
And to devoure al that other swynke.
And for to put us from such ydelnes,
That cause is of so gret confusioun,
I have her doon my faithful busynes
After the legende in translacioun
Right of this glorious lif and passioun,

Thou with thi garlond, wrought with rose and lylye,
The mene I, mayde and martir Cecilie;
And thou, that flour of virgines art alle,
Of whom that Bernard luste so wel to write,
To the at my bygynnyng first I calle;
Thou comfort of us wrecches, do me endite
Thy maydenes deth, that whan thurgh hire merite
Theternal lif, and of the feend victorie,
As man may after reden in hir storie.
Thou mayde and moder, doughter of thi sone,
Thow welle of mercy, synful soules cure,
In whom that God of bountes chees to wone;
Thou humble and heyh over every creature,
Thow nobeledst so ferforth oure nature,
That no disdeyn the maker had of kynde
His sone in blood and fleissh to clothe and wynde.
Withinne the cloyster of thi blisful sydes,
Took mannes schap the eternal love and pees,
That of the trine compas lord and guyde is,
Whom erthe, and see, and heven out of relees
Ay herien; and thou, virgine wemmeles,
Bar of thy body, and dwellest mayden pure,
The creatour of every creature.
Assembled is in the magnificence
With mercy, goodnes, and with such pitee,
That thou, that art the soune of excellence,
Not oonly helpist hem that prayen the,
But often tyme of thy benignité
Ful frely, er that men thin help biseche.
Thou gost biforn, and art her lyfes leche.
Now help, thou meke and blisful faire mayde,
Me flemed wrecche, in this desert of galle;
Thenk on the womman Canane, that sayde

That whelpes ete some of the crommes alle
That from her lordes table ben i-falle;
And though that I, unworthy sone of Eve,
Be synful, yet accepte my bileve.
And for that faith is deth withouten werkis,
So for to werken yive me witt and space,
That I be quit fro thennes that most derk is;
O thou, that art so fair and ful of grace,
Be myn advocat in that hihe place,
Ther as withouten ende is songe Osanne,
Thou Cristes moder, doughter deere of Anne.
And of thi light my soule in prisoun light,
That troubled is by the contagioun
Of my body, and also by the wight
Of everich lust and fals affeccioun;
O heven of refuyt, o salvacioun
Of hem that ben in sorwe and in destresse,
Now help, for to my werk I wil me dresse.
Yet pray I you that reden that I write,
Foryeve me, that I doo no diligence
This ilke story subtilly to endite.
For bothe have I the wordes and sentence
Of him, that at the seintes reverence
The story wroot, and folwen hir legende,
And pray yow that ye wol my werk amende.
First wol I yow the name of seint Cecilie
Expoune, as men may in hir story se;
It is to say on Englisch, hevenes lilie,
For pure chastenesse of virginité;
Or for sche witnesse hadde of honesté
And grene of conscience, and of good fame
The soote savour, lilie was her name.
Or Cecile is to saye, the way of blynde,

For sche ensample was by way of techyng;
Or elles Cecily, as I writen fynde,
Is joyned by a maner of conjoynynge
Of heven and *lya*, and here in figurynge
The heven is sette for thought of holynesse,
And *lya*, for hir lastyng besynesse.
Cecili may eek be seyd in this manere,
Wantyng of blyndnes, for hir grete light
Of sapience, and of thilke thewes cleere.
Or elles lo, this maydenes name bright
Of heven and *loos* comes, of which by right
Men might hir wel the heven of peple calle,
Ensample of goode and wise werkes alle.
For *leos* peple in Englissh is to saye;
And right as men may in the heven see
The sonne and moone, and sterres every waye,
Right so men gostly in this mayden free
Seen of faith the magnanimité,
And eek the clernes hool of sapience,
And sondry werkes, bright of excellence.
And right so as these philosofres wryte,
That heven is swyft and round, and eek brennynge,
Right so was faire Cecily the whyte
Ful swyft and besy ever in good werkynge,
And round and hool in good perseverynge,
And brennyng ever in charité ful brighte;
Now have I yow declared what sche highte.
This mayden bright Cecilie, as hir lyf saith,
Was comen of Romayns and of noble kynde,
And from hir cradel up fostred in the faith
Of Crist, and bar his Gospel in hir mynde;
Sche never cessed, as I writen fynde,
Of hire prayer, and God to love and drede,

Byseching him to kepe hir maydenhede.
And whan this mayde schuld unto a man
Y-wedded be, that was ful yong of age,
Which that i-cleped was Valirian,
And day was comen of hir mariage,
Sche ful devout and humble in hir curraye,
Under hir robe of gold, that sat ful faire,
Hadde next hir fleissh i-clad hir in an heire.
And whil the organs made melodie,
To God alloon in herte thus sang sche;
'O Lord, my soule and eek my body gye
Unwemmed, lest that I confounded be,'
And for his love that deyde upon a tre,
Every secound or thridde day sche faste,
Ay biddyng in hire orisouns ful faste.
The nyght cam, and to bedde moste sche goon
With hir housbond, as oft is the manere,
And prively to him sche sayde anoon;
'O swete and wel biloved spouse deere,
Ther is a counseil, and ye wold it heere,
Which that right fayn I wold unto you saye,
So that ye swere ye schul it not bywraye.'
Valirian gan fast unto hir swere,
That for no caas ne thing that mighte be,
He scholde never *for nothinge* bywreye hire;
And thanne at erst thus *to him* sayde sche;
'I have an aungel which that loveth me,
That with gret love, wher so I wake or slepe,
Is redy ay my body for to kepe;
'*And yif that he may felen, oute of drede,*
That ye me touche or love in vilonye,
He right anoon wil sle you with the dede,
And in youre youthe thus schulde ye dye.

And if that ye in clene love me gye,
He wol yow love as me, for your clennesse,
And schewe to you his joye and his brightnesse.'
Valirian, corrected as God wolde,
Answerde agayn: 'If I schal truste the,
Let me that aungel se, and him biholde;
And if that it a verray aungel be,
Than wol I doon as thou hast prayed me;
And if thou love another man forsothe
Right with this swerd than wol I slee you bothe.'
Cecilie answerd anoon right in this wise;
'If that yow list, the aungel schul ye see,
So that ye trowe on Crist, and you baptise;
Goth forth to Via Apia,' quod sche,
'That fro this toun ne stant but myles thre,
And to the pore folkes that ther duelle
Saith hem right thus, as that I schal you telle.
'Telle hem, I Cecilie yow unto hem sente,
To schewen yow the good Urban the olde,
For secré needes, and for good entente;
And whan that ye seint Urban han byholde,
Tel him the wordes which that I to yow tolde;
And whan that he hath purged you fro synne,
Than schul ye se that aungel er ye twynne.'
Valirian is to the place y-goon,
And right as him was taught by his lernynge,
He fond this holy old Urban anoon
Among the seyntes buriels lotynge;
And he anoon withoute taryinge
Did his message, and whan that he it tolde,
Urban for joye his handes gan upholde.
The teres from his eyghen let he falle;
'Almyghty Lord, O Jhesu Crist,' quod he,

'Sower of chaste counseil, herde of us alle,
The fruyt of thilke seed of chastité
That thou hast sowe *in* Cecilie, tak to the;
Loo, lik a busy bee withouten gyle
The serveth ay thin owne thral Cecilé.
'For thilke spouse, that sche took right now
Ful lyk a fers lyoun, sche sendeth here
As meek as ever was eny lamb to yow.'
And with that word anoon ther gan appere
An old man, clad in white clothes clere,
That had a book with lettres of gold in honde,
And gan to-forn Valirian to stonde.
Valirian, as deed, fyl doun for drede,
Whan he him say; and he him up hente tho,
And on his book right thus he gan to rede;
'O Lord, o feith, oon God withouten mo,
On Christendom, and oon fader of alle also,
Aboven alle, and over alle every where;'
These wordis al with golde ywreten were.
Whan this was radde, than sayde this olde man.
'Leevsytow thys thyng or no? say ye or naye.'
'I leve al this thyng,' quod Valerian,
'For sother thyng than this, I dare wel saye,
Under the hevene no wight ne thynken maye.'
Tho vanysshed the olde man, he nyste where,
And pope Urban him cristenede right there.
Valirian goth home, and fint Cecilie
Withinne his chambre with an aungel stonde.
This aungel had of roses and of lilie
Corounes two, the which he bar in honde.
And first to Cecilie, as I understonde,
He yaf that oon, and after can he take
That other to Valerian hir make.

'With body clene, and with unwemmed thought,
Kepeth ay wel these corounes,' quod he,
'Fro paradys to you I have hem brought,
Ne never moo ne schul they roten be,
Ne leese here soote savour, trusteth me,
Ne never wight schal seen hem with his ye,
But he be chast, and hate vilonye.

'And thou, Valirian, for thou so soone
Assentedist to good counseil, also
Say what the list, and thou schalt have thi boone.'
'I have a brother,' quod Valirian tho,
'That in this world I love no man so,
I pray yow that my brother may have grace
To knowe the trouthe, as I doo in this place.'

The aungel sayde, 'God liketh thy request,
And bothe with the palme of martirdom
Ye schullen come unto his blisful feste.'
And with that word, Tiburce his brother com.
And whan that he the savour undernom,
Which that the roses and the lilies caste,
Withinne his hert he gan to wonder faste.

And sayde, 'I wondre this tyme of the yer,
Whennes that soote savour cometh so
Of rose and lilies, that I smelle her;
For though I had hem in myn hondes tuo,
The savour might in me no depper go.
The swete smel, that in myn hert I fynde,
Hath chaunged me al in another kynde.'

Valirian sayde, 'Tuo corouns have we,
Snow-whyt and rose-reed, that schinen cleere,
Whiche that thine eyghen han no might to see;
And *as* thou smellest hem thurgh my prayere,
So schalt thou seen hem, lieve brothere deere,

If it so be thou wilt withouten slouthe
Bilieven aright, and knowen verray trouthe.'
Tyburce answerde, 'Sayst thou thus to me
In sothenes, or in drem I herkne this?'
'In dremes,' quod Valirian, 'han we be
Unto this tyme, brother myn, i-wys,
But now at erst in trouthe oure duellyng is.'
'How wost thou this,' quod Tyburce, 'and in what wise?'
Quod Valirian, 'That schal I the devyse.
'The aungel of God hath me trouthe y-taught,
Which thou schalt seen, if that thou wilt reneye
The ydols, and be clene, and elles nought.'
(And of the miracles of these corones tweye
Seynt Ambrose in his prefas list to seye;
Solempnely this noble doctour deere
Comendeth it, and saith in this maneere.
The palme of martirdom for to receyve,
Seynt Cecilie, fulfilled of Goddes yifte,
The world and eek hir chamber gan sche weyve;
Witnes Tyburces and Cecilies shrifte,
To whiche God of his bounté wolde schifte
Corounes tuo, of floures wel smellynge,
And made his aungel hem the crounes brynge.
The mayde hath brought this men to blisse above;
The world hath wist what it is worth certeyn,
Devocioun of chastité to love)
Tho schewed him Cecilie al open and pleyn,
That alle ydoles nys but thing in veyn;
For thay ben doumbe, and therto they ben deve,
And chargeth him his ydoles for to leve.
'Who-so that troweth not this, a best he is,'
Quod *tho* Tyburce, 'if that I schal not lye.'

And sche gan kisse his brest that herde this,
And was ful glad he couthe trouthe espye;
'This day I take the for myn allye,'
Sayde this blisful mayde *faire and* deere;
And after that sche sayde as ye may heere.
'Lo, right so as the love of Crist,' quod sche,
'Made me thy brotheres wyf, right in that wyse
Anoon for myn allye heer take I the,
Sin that thou wilt thyne ydoles despise.
Go with thy brother now and the baptise,
And make the clene, so that thou mowe biholde
The aungeles face, of which thy brother tolde.'
Tyburce answerde, and sayde, 'Brother dere,
First tel me whider I schal, and to what man.'
'To whom?' quod he, 'com forth with *right* good cheere,
I wol the lede unto the pope Urban.'
'Til Urban? brother myn Valirian,'
Quod Tiburce, 'wilt thou me thider lede?
Me thenketh that it were a wonder dede.
'Ne menist thou nat Urban,' quod he tho,
'That is so ofte dampned to the deed,
And woneth in halkes alway to and fro,
And dar nought oones putte forth his heed?
Men schold him brenne in a fuyr so reed,
If he were founde, or if men might him spye,
And we also to bere him companye.
'And whil we seken thilke divinité,
That is i-hyd in heven prively,
Algate i-brent in this world schal we be.'
To whom Cecilie answerde *boldely*,
'Men mighten dreden wel and skilfully
This lyf to lese, myn oughne dere brother,
If this were lyvyng oonly and noon other.

'But ther is better lif in other place,
That never schal be lost, ne drede the nought;
Which Goddes sone us tolde thurgh his grace,
That fadres sone that alle thing hath wrought;
And al that wrought is with a skilful thought,
The gost that fro the fader gan procede,
Hath sowled hem withouten eny drede.
'By word and miracle hihe Goddes sone,
Whan he was in this world, declared heere,
That ther was other lyf ther men may wone.'
To whom answerde Tyburce, 'O suster deere,
Ne seydest thou right now in this manere,
Ther nys but oon God, o Lord, in sothfastnesse,
And now of thre how maystow bere witnesse?'
'That schal I telle,' quod sche, 'er that I go.
Right as a man hath sapiences thre,
Memorie, *engyne*, and intellect also,
So in oo being in divinité
Thre persones may ther right wel be.'
Tho gan sche him ful besily to preche
Of Cristes come, and of his peynes teche,
And many pointes of his passioun;
How Goddes sone in this world was withholde
To doon mankynde pleyn remissioun,
That was i-bounde in synne and cares colde.
Al this thing sche unto Tyburce tolde,
And after this Tyburce in good entente,
With Valirian to pope Urban he wente,
That thankede God, and with glad hert and light
He cristened him, and made him in that place
Parfyt in his lernynge, Goddes knyght.
And after this Thiburce gat such grace,
That every day he say in tyme and space

The aungel of God, and every maner boone
That he God asked, it were sped ful soone.
It were ful hard by ordre for to sayne
How many wondres Jhesus for hem wroughte;
But atte last, to tellen schort and playn,
The sergeantz of the toun of Rome hem soughte,
And hem byforn Almache the prefect broughte,
Which hem apposed, and knew alle here entente,
And to the ymage of Jubiter hem sente;
And saide, 'Who-so wil not sacrifise,
Swope of his heved, this my sentence heere.'
Anoon these martires, that I you devyse,
Oon Maximus, that was an officere
Of the prefectes, and his *corniculere*,
Hem hent, and whan he forth the seyntes ladde,
Himself he wept for pité that he hadde.
Whan Maximus had herd the seintes lore,
He gat him of his tormentoures leve,
And bad hem to his hous withouten more;
And with her preching, er that it were eve,
Thay gonne fro the tormentoures to reve,
And fro Maxime, and fro his folk echoone,
The false faith, to trowe in God alloone.
Cecilie cam, whan it was waxen night,
With prestis, that hem cristenid alle in feere;
And afterward, whan day was waxen light,
Cecilie hem sayde with a ful stedefast chere;
'Now, Cristes owne knyghtes leef and deere,
Cast al away the werkes of derknes,
And armith you in armur of brightnes.
'Ye han forsothe y-doon a greet batayle;
Youre cours is doon, youre faith han ye conserved;
Goth to the coroun of lyf that may not fayle;

The rightful jugge, which that ye han served,
Schal yeve it yow, as ye han it deserved.'
And whan this thing was sayd, as I devyse,
Men ladde hem forth to doon the sacrifise.
But whan they were to the place y-brought,
To telle schortly the conclusioun,
They nolde encense ne sacrifice right nought,
But on her knees they setten hem adoun,
With humble hert and sad devocioun,
And leften bothe her heedes in the place;
Here soules wenten to the king of grace,
This Maximus, that say this *thing* betyde,
With pitous teeres tolde it anoon right,
That he here soules saugh to heven glyde
With aungels, ful of clernes and of light;
And with his word convertede many a wight.
For which Almachius dede him so *to*-bete
With whippes of leed, til he his lif gan lete.
Cecilie him took, and buried him anoon
By Tiburce and Valirian softely,
Withinne hire berieng place, under the stoon.
And after this Almachius hastily
Bad his ministres fecchen openly
Cecilie, so that sche might in his presence
Doon sacrifice, and Jubiter encense.
But they, converted at hir wise lore,
Wepten ful sore, and yaven ful credence
Unto hir word, and cryden more and more;
'Crist, Goddes sone, withouten difference,
Is verray God, this is al oure sentence,
That hath so good a servaunt him to serve;
Thus with oon vois we trowen, though we sterve.'
Almachius, that herd of this doynge,

Bad fecchen Cecilie, that he might hir se;
And alther-first, lo, this was his axinge;
'What maner womman art thou?' quod he.
'I am a gentil-womman born,' quod sche.
'I axe the,' quod he, 'though the it greve,
Of thi religioun and of thi byleve.'
'Ye han bygonne your questioun folily,'
Quod sche, 'that wolden tuo answers conclude
In oo demaunde; ye axen lewedly.'
Almache answerde to that similitude,
'Of whens cometh thin answering so rude?'
'Of whens?' quod sche, whan sche was i-freyned,
'Of conscience, and of good faith unfeyned.'
Almachius sayde, 'Takest thou noon heede
Of my power?' and sche answerde him this;
'Youre might,' quod sche, 'ful litel is to drede;
For every mortal mannes power nys
But lyk a bladder ful of wynd, i-wis;
For with a nedeles poynt, whan it is blowe,
May al the bost of it be layd ful lowe.'
'Ful wrongfully bygonne thou,' quod he,
'And yet in wrong is thy perseveraunce.
Wostow nought how oure mighty princes fre
Han thus comaunded and maad ordinaunce,
That every cristen wight schal han penaunce,
But if that he his Cristendom withseye,
And goon al quyt, if he wil it reneye?'
'Youre princes erre, as youre nobleye doth,'
Quoth tho Cecilie; 'and with a wood sentence
Ye make us gulty, and it is nought soth;
For ye that knowen wel oure innocence,
Forasmoche as we doon *ay* reverence
To Crist, and for we bere a Cristen name.

Ye putten on us a crym and eek a blame.
'But we that knowen thilke name so
For vertuous, we may it not withseye.'
Almache sayde, 'Cheese oon of these tue,
Do sacrifice *or* Cristendom reneye,
That thou mow now eschapen by that weye.'
At which the holy blisful faire mayde
Gan for to laughe, and to the jugge sayde;
'O jugge confuse in this nyceté,
Wilt thou that I r*eneye* innocence?
To make me a wikked wight,' quod sche.
'Lo, he dissimuleth heer in audience,
He starith and woodith in his advertence.'
To whom Almachius sayde, 'Unsely wrecche,
Ne wostow nought how fer my might may strecche?
'Han nought our mighty princes to me y-yiven,
Ye bothe power and eek auctorité
To make folk to deyen or to lyven?
Why spekestow so proudly than to me?'
'I speke not but stedefastly,' quod sche,
'Nought proudly, for I say, as for my syde,
We haten deedly thilke vice of pryde.
'And if thou drede nought a soth to heere,
Than wol I schewe al openly by right,
That thou hast maad a ful greet lesyng heere.
Thou saist, thy princes han i-yive the might
Bothe for to sleen and eek to quike a wight,
Thou that ne maist but oonly lif byreve,
Thou hast noon other power ne no leve.
'But thou maist sayn, thi princes han the maked
Minister of deth: for if thou speke of moo,
Thow liest; for thy power is ful naked.'
'Do way thy lewedness,' sayd Almachius tho,

'And sacrifice to oure goddes, er thou go.
I recche nought what wrong that thou me profre,
For I can suffre it as a philosophre.
'But thilke wronges may I not endure,
That thou spekist of oure goddis her,' quod he.
Cecilie answered, 'O nice creature,
Thou saydest no word sins thou spak to me,
That I ne knew therwith thy niceté,
And that thou were in every maner wise
A lewed officer, a vein justise.
'Ther lakketh no thing to thin outer eyen
That thou art blynd; for thing that we seen alle
That it is stoon, that men may wel aspien,
That ilke stoon a god thou wilt it calle.
I rede the, let thin hond upon it falle,
And tast it wel, and stoon thou schalt it fynde;
Sith that thou seest not with thin eyghen blynde.
'It is a schame that the poeple schal
So scorne the, and laughe at thi folye;
For comunly men woot it wel overal,
That mighty God is in his heven hye;
And these ymages, wel thou mayst espie,
To the ne to hemself may nought profyte,
For in effect they ben nought worth a myte.'
Thise wordes and such other sayde sche;
And he wax wroth, and bad men schold hir lede
Hom to hir hous; 'And in hir hous,' quod he,
'Brenne hir right in a bath of flammes rede,'
And as he bad, right so was doon the dede;
For in a bath thay gonne hir faste schetten,
And nyght and day greet fuyr they under betten.
The long night, and eek a day also,
For al the fuyr, and eek the bathes hete,

Sche sat al cold, and felte of *it* no woo,
Hit made hir not oon drope for to swete.
But in that bath hir lif sche moste lete;
For he Almachius, with ful wikke entente,
To sleen hir in the bath his sondes sente.
Thre strokes in the nek he smote hir tho
The tormentour, but for no maner chaunce
He mighte nought smyte hir faire necke a-tuo.
And for ther was that tyme an ordinaunce
That no man scholde do man such penaunce
The ferthe strok to smyten, softe or sore,
This tormentour ne dorste do no more;
But half deed, with hir nekke corven there
He laft hir lye, and on his way *is* went.
The cristen folk, which that about hir were,
With scheetes han the body ful faire y-hent;
Thre dayes lyvede sche in this torment,
And never cessed hem the faith to teche,
That sche hadde *fostred* hem, sche gan to preche.
And hem sche yaf hir moebles and hir thing,
And to the pope Urban bytook hem tho,
And sayde *thus*, 'I axe this of heven kyng,
To have respit thre dayes and no mo,
To recomende to yow, er that I go,
These soules lo, and that I might do wirche
Heer of myn hous perpetuelly a chirche.'
Seynt Urban, with his dekenes prively
The body fette, and buried it by nighte
Among his other seyntes honestely.
Hir hous the chirch of seynt Cecily yit highte;
Seynt Urban halwed it, as he wel mighte;
In which into this day in noble wyse
Men doon to Crist and to his seint servise.

THE PROLOGE OF THE CHANOUNES YEMAN.

WHAN ended was the lif of seynt Cecile,
Er we fully hadde riden fyve myle,
At Boughtoun under Blee us gan atake
A man, that clothed was in clothes blake,
And under that he had a whit surplice,
His hakeney, that was a pomely grice,
So swete, that it wonder was to se,
It semed he hadde priked myles thre.
The hors eek that his Yeman rood upon,
So swette, that unnethes might he goon.
Aboute the peytrel stood the foom ful hye,
He was of foom as flekked as a pye.
A male tweyfold on his croper lay,
It semede that he cariede litel array,
Al light for somer rood this worthy man.
And in myn herte wondren I bigan
What that he was, til that I understood,
How that his cloke was sowed unto his hood;
For which whan I long had avysed me,
I demed him som chanoun for to be.
His hat heng at his bak doun by a laas,
For he hadde riden more than trot or paas,
He had i-pryked lik as he were wood.
A cloote-leef he had under his hood
For swoot, and for to kepe his heed from hete.
But it was joye for to sen him swete;

His forhed dropped as a stillatorie
Were ful of plantayn and of peritorie.
And whanne that he was com, he gan to crie,
'God save,' quod he, 'this joly compaignye!
Fast have I priked,' quod he, 'for your sake,
Bycause that I wolde you *over*take,
To ryden in this mery companye.'
His Yeman eek was ful of curtesye,
And seide, 'Sires, now in the morwe tyde
Out of your ostelry I saugh you ryde,
And warned heer my lord and my soverayn,
Which that to ryden with yow is ful fayn,
For his desport; he loveth daliaunce.'
'Frend, for thy warnyng God yeve the good chaunce,'
Sayde oure Host, 'for certes it wolde seme
Thy lord were wys, and so I may wel deme;
He is ful jocound also dar I leye;
Can he ought telle a mery tale or tweye,
With which he glade may this companye?'
'Who, sire? my lord? Ye, ye, withoute lye,
He can of merthe and eek of jolité
Not but ynough; also, sir, trusteth me,
And ye him knewe as wel as do I,
Ye wolde wonder how wel and thriftily
He couthe werke, and that in sondry wise.
He hath take on him many sondry emprise,
Which were ful hard for eny that is heere
To bringe aboute, but thay of him it leere.
As homely as he ryt amonges yow,
If ye him knewe, it wolde be your prow;
Ye nolde nought for-gon his acqueyntaunce
For moche good, I dar lay in balaunce
Al that I have in my possessioun.

He is a man of heigh discressioun,
I warne yow wel, he is a passyng man.'
'Wel,' quod our Oost, 'I pray the, tel me than,
Is he a clerk, or noon? tel what he is.'
'Nay, he is gretter than a clerk i-wis,'
Sayde the Yeman, 'and in wordes fewe,
Ost, of his craft somwhat I wil you schewe.
I say, my lord can such a subtilité,
(But al his craft ye may nought wite of me,
And somwhat helpe I yit to his worchynge),
That al this ground on which we ben ridynge
Til that we comen to Caunterbury toun,
He couthe al clene turnen up so doun,
And pave it al of silver and of gold.'
And whan this Yeman hadde thus i-told
Unto oure Oost, he seyde, '*Benedicite!*
This thing is wonder merveylous to me,
Syn that this lord is of so heigh prudence,
Bycause of which men schuld him reverence,
That of his worschip rekketh he so lite;
His over slop it is not worth a myte
As in effect to him, so mot I go;
It is al bawdy and to-tore also.
Why is thi lord so slottisch, I the preye,
And is of power better clothis to beye,
If that his dede accorde with thy speche?
Telle me that, and that I the biseche.'
'Why?' quod this Yeman, 'wherto axe ye me?
God help me so, for he schal never the,
(But I wol nought avowe that I say,
And therfor kep it secré I yow pray)
He is to wys in faith, as I bileve.
That *that* is over-don, it wil nought preve

Aright, as clerkes sein, it is a vice;
Wherfore in that I holde him lewed and nyce.
For whan a man hath over-greet a witte,
Ful ofte him happeth to mysusen itte;
So doth my lord, and that me greveth sore.
God it amende, I can saye now nomore.'
'Therof no fors, good Yeman,' quod oure Ost,
'Syn of the connyng of thi lord thou wost,
Tel how he doth, I pray the hertily,
Sin that he is so crafty and so sly.
Wher dwellen ye, if it to telle be?'
'In the subarbes of a toun,' quod he,
'Lurking in hirnes and in lanes blynde,
Wher as these robbours and these theves by kynde
Holden here privé ferful residence,
As thay that dor nought schewen her presence;
So faren we, if I schal saye the sothe.'
'Now,' quod oure Ost, 'yit let me talke to the;
Why artow so discoloured on thy face?'
'Peter!' quod he, 'God yive it harde grace,
I am so used in the fuyr to blowe,
That it hath chaunged my colour I trowe;
I am not wont in no mirour to prie,
But swynke sore, and lerne to multiplie.
We blondren ever, and pouren in the fuyr,
And for al that we faile of oure desir,
For ever we lacken oure conclusioun.
To moche folk we ben bot illusioun,
And borwe gold, be it a pound or tuo,
Or ten or twelve, or many sommes mo,
And make hem wenen atte leste weye,
That of a pound we conne make tweye.
Yit is it fals; and ay we han good hope

It for to doon, and after it we grope.
But that science is so fer us biforn,
We mowen nought, although we had it sworn,
It overtake, it slyt away so faste;
It wol us make beggers atte laste.'
Whil this Yeman was thus in his talkyng,
This Chanoun drough him ner and herd al thing
Which that this Yeman spak, for suspeccioun
Of mennes speche ever hadde this Chanoun;
For Catoun saith, that he that gulty is,
Demeth al thing be spoke of him, i-wis;
By-cause of that he gan so neigh to drawe
His Yeman, that he herde al his sawe;
And thus he sayd unto his Yeman tho;
'Hold now thi pees, and spek no wordes mo;
For if thou do, thou schalt it deere abye:
Thow sclaundrest me here in this companye,
And eek discoverest that thou schuldest hide.'
'Ye,' quod oure Ost, 'tel on, what so bytyde,
Of alle this thretyng recche the nought a myte.'
'In faith,' quod he, 'no more do I but lite.'
And whan this Chanoun seih it wolde not be,
But this Yeman wolde telle his priveté,
He fledde away for verray sorwe and schame.
'A!' quod this Yeman, 'her schal arise game;
Al that I can anoon now wol I telle,
Sin he is goon; the foul feend him quelle!
For never herafter wol I with him meete
For peny ne for pound, I wol byheete.
He that me broughte first unto that game,
Er that he deye, sorwe have he and schame!
For it is ernest to me, by my faith;
That fele I wel, what-so eny man saith;

And yet for al my smert, and al my greef,
For al my sorwe, and labour, and mescheef,
I couthe never leve it in no wise.
Now wolde God my wyt mighte suffise
To tellen al that longeth to that art;
But natheles, yet wil I telle yow part;
Sin that my lord is goon, I wol nought spare,
Such thing as that I knowe, I wol declare.
'With this Chanoun I duelled have seven yer
And of his science am I never the ner;
Al that I hadde, I have *i*-lost therby,
And God wot, so hath many mo than I.
Ther I was wont to be right freisch and gay
Of clothing, and of other good array,
Now may I were an hose upon myn heed;
And where my colour was bothe freissch and reed,
Now it is wan, and of a leden hewe,
(Who-so it useth, sore schal he rewe);
And of my swynk yet blended is myn ye;
Lo! such avauntage it is to multiplie!
That slydynge science had*de* me made so bare,
That I have no good, wher that ever I fare;
And yit I am endetted so therby
Of gold, that I have borwed trewely,
That whil I lyve schal I it quite never;
Lat every man be war by me for ever.
What maner man that casteth him therto,
If he continue, I holde his thrift i-do:
So help me God, therby schal he not wynne,
But empte his purs, and make his wittes thynne.
And whan he, thurgh his madnes and folye,
Hath lost his owne good in jeupardie,
Than he exciteth other men therto,

To leese her good, as he himself hath do.
For unto schrewes joy it is and ese
To have here felawes in peyne and desese.
Thus was I oones lerned of a clerk;
Of that no charge; I wol speke of oure werk.
Whan we ben ther as we schul exercise
Oure elvyssh craft, we seme wonder wyse,
Oure termes ben so clergeal and queynte.
I blowe the fuyr til that myn herte feynte.
What schulde I telle ech proporcioun
Of thinges which that we werke up and doun,
As an fyve or six ounces, may wel be,
Of silver, or som other quantité?
And besy me to telle yow the names
Of orpiment, brent bones, yren squames,
That into poudre grounden ben ful smal?
And in an erthen pot how put is al,
And salt y-put in, and also paupere,
Biforn these poudres that I speke of heere,
And wel i-covered with a lamp of glas?
And of moche other thing what that ther was?
And of the pot and glasis englutyng,
That of the aier mighte passe no thing?
And of the esy fuyr, and smert also,
Which that was maad? and of the care and wo,
That we hadde in oure matiers sublymynge,
And in amalgamynge, and calcenynge
Of quyksilver, y-clept mercury crude?
For alle oure sleightes we can nought conclude.
Oure orpiment, and sublyment mercurie,
Oure grounde litarge eek on the porfurye,
Of ech of these of ounces a certayn
Nat helpeth us, oure laboure is in vayn.

Ne eek oure spirites ascencioun,
Ne eek our matiers that lyn al fix adoun,
Mowe in oure werkyng us no thing avayle;
For lost is al oure labour and travayle,
And al the cost on twenty devel waye
Is lost also, which we upon it laye.
Ther is also ful many another thing,
That is to oure craft appertenyng,
Though I by ordre hem here reherse ne can,
Bycause that I am a lewed man,
Yet wil I telle hem, as they come to mynde,
Though I ne conne nought sette hem in her kynde;
As bol armoniak, verdegres, boras;
And sondry vessels maad of erthe and glas,
Oure urinals and oure descensories,
Viols, croslets, and sublimatories,
Concurbites, and alembikes eeke,
And othere suche, deere y-nough a leeke,
Nat needith it to rehersen hem alle;
Watres rubifying, and boles galle,
Arsnek, sal armoniak, and brimstoon.
And herbes couthe I telle eek many oon,
As egrimoigne, valirian, and lunarie,
And other suche, if that me list to tarie;
Oure lampes brennyng bothe night and daye,
To bringe aboute oure craft if that we maye;
Oure fournies eek of calcinacioun,
And of watres albificacioun,
Unslekked lym, *chalk*, and glayre of an ey,
Poudres dyvers, aissches, dong, pisse, and cley,
Cered poketts, sal petre, vitriole;
And dyvers fuyres maad of woode and cole;
Salt tartre, alcaly, and salt preparat,

And combust matieres, and coagulat;
Cley maad with hors or mannes her, and oyle
Of tartre, alym, glas, berm, wort, and argoyle,
Resalgar, and oure matiers enbibing;
And eek of oure matiers encorporing,
And *of oure* silver citrinacioun,
Our cementynge and fermentacioun,
Oure yngottes, testes, and many mo.
I wol you telle as was me taught also
The foure spiritz, and the bodies seven
By ordre, as ofte herd I my lord neven.
The firste spirit quyksilver called is;
The secound orpiment; the thridde i-wis
Sal armoniac, and the ferthe bremstoon.
The bodies seven, eek, lo hem heer anoon.
Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe;
Mars yren, Mercurie quyksilver we clepe;
Saturnus leed, and Jubitur is tyn,
And Venus coper, by my fader kyn.

'This cursed craft who so wol exercise,
He schal no good han that may him suffise;
For al the good he spendeth theraboute
He lese schal, therof have I no doute.
Who-so that list to outen his folye,
Let him come forth and lerne multiplie;
And every man that hath ought in his cofre,
Let him appiere, and wexe a philosofre,
Ascauns that craft is so light to lere.
Nay, nay, God wot, al be he monk or frere,
Prest *or* chanoun, or eny other wight
Though he sit at his book bothe day and night
In lernyng of this elvysch nice lore,
Al is in vayn, and pardé moche more

Is to lerne a lewed man this subtilté;
Fy, spek not therof, for it wil not be.
Al couthe he letterure, or couthe he noon,
As in effect, he schal fynd it al oon;
For bothe tuo by my *salvacioun*
Concluden in multiplicacioun
I-liche wel, whan thay han al y-do;
This is to sayn, thay fayle bothe tuo.
Yet foryat I to make rehersayle
Of watres corosif, and of lymayle,
And of bodyes mollificacioun,
And also of here enduracioun,
Oyles ablucioun, and metal fusible,
To tellen al, wolde passen eny bible
That owher is; wherfore, as for the beste,
Of alle these names now wil I me reste:
For, as I trowe, I have yow told y-nowe
To reyse a feend, al loke he never so rowe.
A, nay, let be; the philosophre stoon,
Elixir clept, we sechen fast echoon,
For hadde we him, than were we syker y-nough;
But unto God of heven I make avow,
For al oure craft, whan we han al y-do,
And al oure sleight, he wol not come us to.
He hath i-made us spende moche good,
For sorwe of which almost we wexen wood,
But that good hope crepeth in oure herte,
Supposing ever, though we sore smerte,
To ben relieved by him after-ward.
Suche supposing and hope is scharp and hard.
I warne you wel it is to seken ever.
That future temps hath made men dissevere,
In trust therof, from al that ever they hadde

Yet of that art thay conne nought wexe sadde,
For unto hem it is a bitter swete;
So semeth it; for nadde thay but a scheete
Which thay mighte wrappe hem in a-night,
And a bak to walke inne by day-light,
They wolde hem selle, and spenden on this craft;
Thay can nought stinte, til no thing be laft.
And evermore, wher that ever they goon,
Men may hem knowe by smel of bremstoon;
For al the world thay stynken as a goot;
Her savour is so rammyssch and so hoot,
That though a man fro hem a myle be,
The savour wol infecte him, trusteth me.
Lo, thus by smellyng and by thred-bare arraye,
If that men list, this folk they knowe maye.
And if a man wol aske hem prively,
Why thay ben clothed so unthriftily,
Right anoon thay wol rounen in his eere,
And say, if that thay espied were,
Men wold hem slee, bycause of here science;
Lo, thus this folk bytrayen innocence.
Passe over this, I go my tale unto.
Er than the pot be on the fuyr y-do
Of metals with a certeyn quantité,
My lord hem tempreth, and no man but he;
(Now he is goon, I dar saye boldely)
For as men sayn, he can doon craftily;
Algate I wot wel he hath such a name,
And yet ful ofte he renneth in a blame;
'And wite ye how? ful ofte it happeth so,
The pot to-breketh, and farwel, al is goo.
These metals been of so gret violence,
Oure walles may not make hem resistence,

But if thay were wrought of lym and stoon;
Thay percen so, that thurgh the wal thay goon;
And some of hem synken into the grounde,
(Thus have we lost by tymes many a pounde),
And some are skatered al the floor aboute;
Some lepe into the roof, withouten doute.
Though that the feend nought in oure sight him schewe,
I trowe that he with us be, that schrewe!
In helle, wher that he is lord and sire,
Nis ther no more woo, ne anger, ne ire.
Whan that oure pot is broke, as I have sayd,
Every man chyt, and halt him evel apayd.
Som sayd it was long on the fuyr-makyng;
Some sayde nay, it was on the blowyng;
(Than was I ferd, for that was myn office).
'Straw!' quod the thridde, 'ye been lewed and nyce,
It was nought tempred as it oughte be.'
'Nay,' quod the ferthe, 'stynt and herkne me;
Bycause oure fuyr was nought y-maad of beech,
That is the cause, and other noon, so theech.'
I can not telle wheron it *is* along,
But wel I woot gret stryf is us among.
'What?' quod my lord, 'ther is no more to doone,
Of these periles I wol be war eftsoone.
I am right siker, that the pot was crased.
Be as be may, be ye no thing amased.
As usage is, let swoope the floor as-swithe;
Pluk up your hertes and beth glad and blithe.'
The mullok on an heep i-swoped was,
And on the floor y-cast a canevas,
And al this mulloc in a syve i-throwe,
And sifted, and y-plukked many a throwe.

'Pardé,' quod oon, 'somwhat of oure metal
Yet is ther heer, though that we have nought al.
And though this thing myshapped hath as now,
Another tyme it may be wel y-now.
Us moste putte oure good in adventure.
A marchaunt, pardé, may not ay endure,
Trusteth me wel, in his prosperité;
Som tyme his good is drowned in the see,
And som tyme cometh it sauf unto the londe.'
'Pees!' quod my lord, 'the nexte tyme I wol fond.
To bringe oure craft al in another plyte,
And but I do, sires, let me have the wyte;
Ther was defaute in som what, wel I woot.'
Another sayde, the fuyr was over hoot.
But be it hoot or cold, I dar saye this,
That we concluden evermor amys;
We faile of that which that we wolden have,
And in oure madnesse evermore we rave.
And whan we ben togideres everichon,
Everiche man semeth a Salamon.
But al thing which that schineth as the gold,
Is nought gold, as that I have herd told;
Ne every appel that is fair at ye,
Ne is not good, what so men clappe or crye.
Right so, lo, fareth it amonges us.
He that semeth the wisest, by Jesus!
Is most fool, whan it cometh to the preef;
And he that semeth trewest is a theef.
That schul ye knowe, er that I fro yow wende,
By that I of my tale have maad an ende.
'Ther is a chanoun of religioun
Amonges us, wold infecte al a toun,
Though it as gret were as was Ninivé,

Rome, Alisaundre, Troye, or other thre.
His sleight and his infinite falsnesse
Ther couthe no man writen, as I gesse,
Though that he mighte lyven a thousand yeer
Of al this world of falsheed nys his peer,
For in his termes he wol him so wynde,
And speke his wordes in so sleygh a kynde,
Whan he comune schal with eny wight,
That he wil make him dote anoon right,
But it a feend be, as himselven is.
Ful many a man hath he bygiled er this,
And wol, if that he lyve may a while;
And yet men ryde and goon ful many a myle
Him for to seeke, and have his aqueintaunce,
Nought knowyng of his false governaunce.
And if yow list to yeve me audience,
I wol it telle here in youre presence.
But, worschipful chanouns religious,
Ne demeth not that I sclaundre youre hous,
Although my tale of a chanoun be.
Of every ordre som schrewe is, pardee;
And God forbede that al a companye
Schulde rewe a singuler mannes folye.
To sclaunder yow is no thing myn entent,
But to correcten that is mys i-ment.
This tale was not oonly told for yow,
But eek for other moo; ye woot wel how
That among Cristes apostles twelve
Ther was no traytour but Judas himselve;
Than why schulde the remenaunt have a blame,
That gulteles were? by yow I say the same.
Save oonly this, if ye wol herkene me,
If any Judas in youre covent be,

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Remewe him by tyme, I yow rede,
If schame or los may causen eny drede.
And beth no thing displesed, I you pray,
But in this caas herkeneth what I say.'

THE CHANOUNES YEMANNES TALE.

IN Londoun was a prest, an annueler,
That therin dwelled hadde many a yer,
Which was so plesaunt and so servisable
Unto the wyf, wher as he was at table,
That sche wolde suffre him no thing for to paye
For bord ne clothing, went he never so gaye;
And spending silver had he right y-nough;
Therof no force; I wol procede as now,
And telle forth my tale of the chanoun,
That broughte this prest to confusion.

This false chanoun cam upon a day
Unto the prestes chambre wher he lay,
Biseching him to lene him a certeyn
Of gold, and he wolde quyt hit him ageyn.
'Lene me a mark,' quod he, 'but dayes thre,
And at my day I wil hit quyte the.
And if so be, that thou fynde me fals,
Another day hong me up by the hals.'
This prest him took a mark, and that as-swithe,
And this chanoun him thankid ofte sithe,
And took his leve, and wente forth his wey;
And atte thridde day brought *hym* his money,

And to the prest he took his gold agayn,
Wherof this prest was wonder glad and fayn.
'Certes,' quod he, 'no thing annoyeth me
To lene a man a noble, or two, or thre,
Or what thing were in my possessioun,
Whan he so trewe is of condicioun,
That in no wise he breke wol his day;
To such a man I can never saye nay.'
'What?' quod this chanoun, 'schold I be untrewe?
Nay, that were thing i-fallen of the newe.
Trouthe is a thing that I wol ever kepe,
Unto that day in which that I schal crepe
Into my grave, and elles God forbede!
Bilieveth that as siker as your crede.
God thank I, and in good tyme be it sayd,
That ther was never man yet evel apayd
For gold ne silver that he to me lente,
Ne never falshed in myn hert I mente.
And, sire,' quod he, 'now of my priveté,
Syn ye so goodlich have be unto me,
And kythed to me so gret gentilesce,
Som-what, to quyte with youre kyndenesse,
I wil yow schewe, and if yow lust to lere
I wil yow teche pleynly the manere,
How I kan werken in philosophie.
Takith good heed, ye schul seen wel at ye,
That I wol doon a maystry er I go.'
'Ye?' quod the prest, 'ye, sire, and wol ye so?
Mary! therof I pray you hertily.'
'At youre comaundement, sire, trewely,'
Quod the chanoun, 'and elles God forbede!'
Lo, how this theef couthe his servise beede.
Ful soth it is that such profred servise

Stynketh, as witnessen these olde wise;
And that ful soone I wol it verefye
In this chanoun, roote of al treccherie,
That evermor delit hath and gladnesse
(Such feendly thoughtes in his hert empresse)
How Cristes poeple he may to meschief bringe:
God kepe us from his fals dissimilynge!
What wiste this prest with whom that he delte?
Ne of his harm comyng he no thing felte.
O seely prest, o sely innocent,
With coveytise anoon thou schalt be blent;
O graceles, ful blynd is thy conceyt,
No thing art thou war of the deceyt,
Which that this fox i-schapen hath to the;
His wily wrenches y-wis thou maist not fle.
Wherfor to go to the conclusioun,
That referreth to thy confusion,
Unhappy man, anoon I wil me hie
To tellen thin unwitte and thy folye,
And eek the falsnesse of that other wrecche,
Als ferforth as my connyng wol strecche.
This chanoun was my lord, ye wolde weene;
Sire Ost, in faith, and by the heven queene,
It was another chanoun, and not he,
That can an hundred fold more subtilté.
He hath bitrayed folkes many a tyme;
Of his falsnes it dullith me to ryme.
Ever whan I speke of his falshede,
For schame of him my cheekes wexen reede;
Algates thay bygonne for to glowe,
For reednes have I noon, right wel I knowe,
In my visage, for fumes diverse
Of metals, which ye han me herd reherse.

Consumed and wasted han my reednesse.
Now tak heed of this chanouns cursednesse.
'Sire,' quod he to the prest, 'let your man goon
For quyksilver, that we it hadde anoon:
And let him bringe ounces tuo or thre;
And whan he cometh, as faste schul ye see
A wonder thing, which ye saughe never er this.'
'Sire,' quod the prest, 'it schal be doon, I wis.'
He bad his servaunt fecche him his thinges,
And he al redy was at his biddynges,
And went him forth, and com anoon agayn
With his quyksilver, schortly for to sayn,
And took these ounces thre to the chanoun;
And he it layde faire and wel adoun,
And bad the servaunt coles for to bringe,
That he anoon mighte go to his werkynge.
The coles right anoon weren i-fett,
And this chanoun took out a croselett,
Out of his bosom, and schewed it to the prest.
'This instrument,' quod he, 'which that thou sest,
Tak in thin hond, and put thiself therinne
Of this quyksilver an unce, and her bygynne
In the name of Crist to wax a philosophre.
Ther ben ful fewe, whiche that I wolde profre
To schewe hem thus moche of my science;
For ye schul seen heer by experience,
That this quiksilver I wol mortifye,
Right in youre sight anoon, withouten lye,
And make it as good silver and as fyn
As ther is any in youre purs or myn,
Or elles wher; and make it malleable;
And elles holdeth me fals and unable
Amonges folk for ever to appeere.

I have a pouder heer that coste me deere,
Schal make al good, for it is cause of al
My connyng, which that I you schewe schal.
Voydith youre man, and let him be theroute;
And schet the dore, whils we ben aboute
Oure privetee, that no man us aspye,
Whiles we werken in this philosophie.'
Al, as he bad, fulfilled was in dede.
This ilke servaunt anoon right out yede,
And his maister schitte the dore anoon,
And to here labour speedily thai goon.

This prest, at this cursed chanouns biddyng,
Upon the fuyr anoon sette this thing,
And blew the fuyr, and busied him ful faste;
And this chanoun into the croslet caste
A pouder, noot I wherof that it was
I-maad, outher of chalk, outher of glas,
Or som what elles, *that* was nought worth a flye
To blynde with this prest; and bad him hye
These coles for to couchen al above
The croislet; for 'in tokenyng I the love,'
Quod this chanoun, 'thin oughne handes tuo
Schal wirche al thing which that schal be do.'
'Graunt mercy,' quod the prest, and was ful glad,
And couchede coles as the chanoun bad.
And whil he besy was, this feendly wrecche,
This false chanoun (the foule feend him fecche!)
Out of his bosom took a bechen cole,
In which ful subtilly was maad an hole,
And therin put was of silver lymayle
An unce, and stopped was withoute fayle
This hole with wex, to kepe the lymail in.
And understondith, that this false gyn

Was not maad ther, but it was maad bifore;
And other thinges I schal telle more
Her after-ward, which that he with him brought*e*.
Er he com ther, to bigyle him he thought*e*,
And so he dede, er thay wente atwynne;
Til he hadd*e* torned him, couthe he nought blynne.
It dulleth me, whan that I of him speke;
On his falshede fayn wold I me wreke,
If I wist how, but he is heer and there,
He is so variant, he byt no where.
But taketh heed now, sires, for Goddes love.
He took *th*is cole of which I spak above,
And in his hond he bar it prively,
And whiles the preste couched*e* bysily
The coles, as I tolde yow er this,
This chanoun sayde, 'Freend, ye doon amys;
This is not couched as it oughte be,
But soone I schal amenden it,' quod he.
'Now let me melle therwith but a while,
For of yow have I pitee, by seint Gile!
Ye been right hoot, I se wel how ye swete;
Have heer a cloth and wype away the wete.'
And whiles that this prest him wyped haas,
This chanoun took his cole, I schrewe his faas!
And layd it aboven on the myd-ward
Of the croslet, and blew wel afterward,
Til that the coles gonne faste brenne.
'Now yeve us drinke,' quod the chanoun thenne,
'Als-swithe al schal be wel, I undertake.
Sitte we doun, and let us mery make.'
And whan *that* the chanoun*es* bechene cole
Was brent al the lymail out of the hole
Into the crosselet anoon fel adoun;

And so it moste needes by resoun;
Sins it so even above couched was;
But therof wist the prest no thing, allas!
He demed alle the colis i-liche goode,
For of the sleight he no thing understood.
And whan this alcamister saugh his tyme,
'Rys up, sire prest,' quod he, 'and stonde by me;
And for I wot wel ingot have ye noon,
Goth, walkith forth, and brynge a chalk-stoon;
For I wol make it of the same schap,
That is an ingold, if I may have hap.
And bringe with you a bolle or a panne
Ful of water, and ye schul wel se thanne
How that oure besynes schal happe and preve.
And yit, for ye schul have no mysbileeve
Ne wrong conceyt of me in youre absence,
I ne wol nought ben out of youre presence,
But go with you, and come with you agayn.'
The chambur dore, schortly for to sayn,
Thay opened and schette, and went forth here weye,
And forth with hem they caryede the keye,
And comen agayn withouten eny delay.
What schuld I tary al the longe day?
He took the chalk, and schop it in the wise
Of an ingot, as I schal yow devyse;
I say, he took out of his oughne sleeve
A teyne of silver (evel mot he cheeve!)
Which that was but an unce of wight.
And taketh heed now of his cursed slight;
He schop his ingot in lengthe and in brede
Of this teyne, withouten eny drede;
So sleighly, that the prest it nought aspyde;
And in his sleeve agayn he gan it hyde;

And fro the fuyr he took up his mateere,
And into the ingot put it with mery cheere;
And into the watir-vessel he it caste,
Whan that him list, and bad this prest as faste,
'Loke what there is; put in thin hond and grope;
Thou fynde ther silver schalt, as I hope.'
What devel of helle schold it elles be?
Schavyng of silver, silver is, pardé!
He putte in his hond and tok up a teyne
Of silver fyn, and glad in every veyne
Was this prest, whan he saugh it was so.
'Goddes blessyng, and his modres also,
And alle halwes, have ye, sire chanoun,'
Seyde the prest, 'and I her malisoun!
But, and ye vouchesauf to teche me
This nobil craft and this subtilité,
I wil be youre in al that ever I may.'
Quod this chanoun, 'Yet wol I make assay
The secound tyme, that ye mowe taken heede,
And ben expert of this, and in your neede
Another day *to assay* in myn absence
This dicipline, and this crafty science;
Let take another unce,' quod he tho,
'Of quyksilver, withouten wordes mo,
And do therwith as ye have doon er this
With that other, which that now silver is.'
The prest him busyeth in al that he can
To doon as this chanoun, this cursed man,
Comaunded him, and faste blew the fuyr,
For to come to theffect of his desyr.
And this chanoun right in the mene-while
Al redy was this prest eft to bygile,
And for a countenaunce in his hond bar

An holow stikke (tak keep and be war),
In thende of which an unce and no more
Of silver lymail put was, as bifore
Was in his cole, and stopped with wex wel
For to kepe in his limail every del.
And whil the prest was in his besynesse,
This chanoun with his stikke gan him dresse
To him anoon, and his pouder cast in,
As he dede er, (the devel out of his skyn
Him torne, I pray to God, for his falshede!
For he was ever fals in *worde* and deede).
And with this stikke *above* the croslet,
That was ordeyned with that false get,
He styrede the coles, til relente gan
The wex agayn the fuyr, as every man,
But it a fool be, woot wel it moot nede,
And al that in the hole was out yede,
And into the croslet hastily it fel.
Now, good sires, what wol ye bet then wel?
Whan that this prest thus was begiled agayn,
Supposyng not but trouthe, soth to sayn,
He was so glad, that I can nought expresse
In no maner his myrthe and his gladnesse,
And to the chanoun he profred eft soone
Body and good. 'Ye,' quod the chanoun, 'soone,
Though pore I be, crafty thou schalt me fynde;
I warne the, yet is ther more byhynde.
Is ther any coper herinne?' quod he.
'Ye, sir,' quod this prest, 'I trowe ther be.
Elles go bye som, and that as-swithe.'
'Now good sire, go forth thy way and hy the.'
He went his way, and with this coper cam
And this chanoun it in his hondes nam,

And of that coper weyed out but an ounce.
Al to simple is my tongue to pronounce,
As minister of *my* witt, the doublenesse
Of this chanoun, root of *al* cursednesse.
He semede frendly to hem that knew him nought,
But he was fendly bothe in werk and thought.
It werieth me to telle of his falsnesse;
And natheles yit wol I it expresse,
To that entent men maye be war therby,
And for noon other cause trewely.
He put this unce of coper in the croslet,
And on the fuyr als-swithe he hath it set,
And cast in pouder, and made the prest to blowe,
And in his worching for to stoupe lowe,
As he dede er, and al nas but a jape;
Right as him liste the prest he made his ape.
And afterward in the ingot he it caste,
And in the panne putte it atte laste
Of water, and in he put his owne hond.
And in his sleeve, as ye byforen-hond
Herde me telle, he had a silver teyne;
He sleyghly took it out, this cursed heyne,
(Unwitynge this prest of his false craft),
And in the pannes botme he hath it laft;
And in the water rumbleth to and fro.
And wonder prively took it up also
The coper teyne, (nought knowyng this prest)
And hidde it, and hent him by the brest,
And to him spak, and thus sayde in his game;
'Stoupeth adoun! by God, ye ben to blame;
Helpeth me now, as I dede yow whil er;
Put in your hond, and loke what is ther.'
This prest took up this silver teyne anoon.

And thanne sayde the chanoun, let us goon
With these thre teynes whiche that we han wrought,
To som goldsmyth, and wite if it be ought.
For by my faith I nolde, for myn hood,
But if they were silver fyn and good,
And that as-swithe proved schal it be.'
Unto the goldsmith with these teynes thre
Thay went, and putte these teynes in assay
To fuyr and hammer; mighte no man saye nay
But that thay were as hem oughte be.
This sotted prest, who was gladder than he?
Was never brid gladder agayn the day;
Ne nightyngale in the sesoun of May
Was never noon, that liste better to synge;
Ne lady lustier in carolynge;
Or for to speke of love and wommanhede,
Ne knyght in armes doon an hardy deede
To stonde in grace of his lady deere,
Than hadde this prest this craft for to lere,
And to the chanoun thus he spak and seyde;
'For the love of God, that for us alle deyde,
And as I may deserve it unto yow,
What schal this receyt coste? telleth now.'
'By oure lady,' quod the chanoun, 'it is deere,
I warne yow wel, for, *save* I and a freere,
In Engelond ther can no man it make.'
'No fors,' quoth he; 'now, sire, for Goddes sake,
What schal I paye? telleth me, I pray.'
'I-wis,' quod he, 'it is ful dere I say.
Sire, at a word, if that ye lust it have,
Ye schul paye fourty pound, so God me save;
And nere the frendschipe that ye dede er this
To me, ye schulde paye more, i-wys.'

This prest the somme of fourty pound anoon
Of nobles fette, and took hem everychoon
To this chanoun, for this ilke receyt.
Al his werkyng nas but fraude and deceyt.
'Sire prest,' he seyde, 'I kepe have no loos
Of my craft, for I wold it kept were cloos;
And as ye loveth me, kepeth it secré.
For and men knewe al my sotilté,
By God, men wolden have so gret envye
To me, bycause of my philosophie,
I schulde be deed, ther were noon other weye.'
'God it forbede,' quoth the prest, 'what *ye* seye.
Yet had I lever spenden al the good
Which that I have, (and elles wax I wood)
Than that ye schulde falle in such meschief.'
'For your good wil, sir, have ye right good preef,'
Quoth the chanoun, 'and far wel *graunt mercy*.'
He went his way, and never the prest him sey
After this day; and whan that this prest scholde
Maken assay, at such tyme as he wolde,
Of this receyt, far wel, it wolde not be.
Lo, thus byjaped and bygilt was he;
Thus maketh he his introduccioun
To bringe folk to here destruccioun.
Considereth, sires, how that in ech astaat
Bitwixe men and gold ther is debaat,
So ferforth that unnethe ther is noon.
This multiplying blent so many oon,
That in good faith I trowe that it be
The cause grettest of swich skarseté.
Philosophres speken so mistyly
In this craft, that men conne not come therby,
For any witt that men han now on dayes.

They may wel chiteren, as doon these jayes,
And in here termes sette lust and peyne,
But to her purpos schul thay never atteyne.
A man may lightly lerne, if he have ought,
To multiplie and bringe his good to nought.
Lo, such a lucre is in this lusty game;
A mannes mirthe it wol torne into grame.
And empte also grete and hevy purses,
And make folk to purchace curses
Of hem, that han her good therto i-lent.
O, fy! for schame, thay that have be brent,
Allas! can thay not fle the fuyres hete?
Ye that it usen, I rede ye it lete,
Lest ye lesen al; for bet than never is late;
Never to thrive, were to long a date.
Though ye prolle ay, ye schul it never fynde;
Ye ben as bolde as is Bayard the blynde,
That blundreth forth, and peril casteth noon;
He is as bold to renne agayn a stoon,
As for to go bysides in the wey;
So fare ye that multiplie, I sey.
If that youre yghen can nought seen aright,
Loke that youre mynde lakke nought his sight.
For though ye loke never so brode and stare,
Ye schul nought wynne a mite on that chaffare,
But wasten al that ye may rape and renne.
Withdrawe the fuyr, lest it *to* faste brenne;
Medleth no more with that art, I mene;
For yif ye doon, youre thrift is goon ful clene.
And right as-swithe I wol yow telle heere
What philosophres sein in this mateere.

Lo, thus saith Arnold of the Newe-toun,
As his Rosarie maketh mencioun,

He saith right thus, withouten eny lye:
Ther may no man Mercury mortifye,
But hit be with his brother knowleching.
Lo, how that he, which that first sayde this thing,
Of philosophres fader was, Hermes;
He saith, how that the dragoun douteles
He dyeth nought, but-if that he be slayn
With his brother. And that is for to sayn,
By the dragoun, Mercury, and noon other
He understood, and brimstoon be his brother,
That out of Sol and Luna were i-drawe.
'And therfore,' sayde he, 'take heed to my sawe;
Let no man besy him this art to seche,
But-*if* that he thentencioun and speche
Of philosophres understonde can;
And if he do, he is a lewed man.
For this sciens, and this connyng,' quod he,
'Is of the Secré of secretz, pardé.'
Also ther was a disciple of Plato,
That on a tyme sayde his maister to,
As his book *Senior* wil bere witnesse,
And this was his demaunde in sothfastnesse:
'Tel me the name of th*ilke* privé stoon.'
And Plato answered unto him anoon,
'Take the stoon that titanos men name.'
'Which is that?' quod he. 'Magnasia is the same,'
Sayde Plato. 'Ye, sire, and is it thus?
That is *ignotum per ignotius*.
What is magnasia, good sir, I you pray?'
'It is a water that is maad, I say,
Of elementes foure,' quod Plato.
'Telle me the roote, good sire,' quod he tho,
'Of that water, if it be your wille.'

'Nay, nay,' quod Plato, 'certeyn that I nylle.
The philosophres sworn were everichoon,
That thay ne scholde discovere it unto man noon,
Ne in no book it write in no manere;
For unto Crist it is so leef and deere,
That he wil not that it discovered be,
But wher it liketh to his deité
Man to enspire, and eek for to defende
Whom that him liketh; lo, this is the ende.'
Than conclude I thus, syn God of hevene
Ne wol not that the philosophres nevene,
How that a man schal come unto this stoon,
I rede as for the beste, let it goon.
For who-so maketh God his adversarie,
As for to werke eny thing in contrarie
Unto his wil, certes never schal he thrive,
Though that he multiplie terme of al his lyve.
And ther a poynt; for ended is my tale.
God send every trewe man boote of his bale!

THE DOCTOURES PROLOGE.

WHAN that this yoman his tale ended hadde
Of this false chanon whiche that was so badde,
Oure oste gan say, 'truly and certayne
Thys preest was begyled, sothely for to sayne,
(He wenynge for to be a phylosofre)
Tylle he right no golde lefte in hys coffre;
And sothely this preest hade a lither jape,
Thys cursed chanoun put in hys hood an ape,
'But al this passe wil I overe as nowe.
Sir Doctour of Phisyke I pray you,
Telle us a tale of some honeste matere.'
'It schal be done, yf that ye wille it here,
Sayde this doctour, and hys tale began anone.
'Nowe, gode men,' quod he, herkeneth everech oon.'

THE TALE OF THE DOCTOR OF PHISIK.

THER was, as telleth Thitus Lyvius,
A knight, that cleped was Virginius,
Fulfild of honours and of worthines,
And strong of frendes, and of gret riches.
This knight a doughter he hadde by his wyf,
And never ne hadde he mo in al his lyf.

Fair was this mayde in excellent beauté
Above every wight that men maye se;
For Nature hath with sovereyn diligence
I-formed hir in so gret excellence,
As though sche wolde say, 'Lo, I, Nature,
Thus can I forme and peynte a creature,
Whan that me lust; who can me counterfete?
Pigmalion? nought, though he alwey forge and bete,
Or grave, or paynte; for I dar wel sayn,
Apelles *Zeuxis*, schulde wirche in vayn,
Other to grave, or paynte, or forge *or* bete,
If thay presumede me to counterfete.
For He that is the Former principal
Hath maad me his viker general,
To forme and peynte erthely creature
Right as me lust, al thing is in my cure
Under the moone that may wane and waxe,
And for my werke no thing wol I axe;
My lord and I ben fully at accord.
I made hir to the worschip of my Lord;
So do I alle myn other creatures,
What colour that thay been, or what figures.'
Thus semeth me that Nature wolde saye.
This mayde was of age twelf yer and twaye,
In which that nature hath suche delite.
For right as sche can peynte a lili white
And rody a rose, right with such peynture
Sche peynted hath this noble creature
Er sche was born, upon her limes fre,
Where als *by* right such coloures schulde be;
And Phebus deyed hadde hire tresses grete,
I-lyk to the stremes of his borned hete.
And if that excellent was hir beauté,

A thousand fold more vertuous was sche.
In hire ne lakketh no condicioun,
That is to preyse, as by discrecioun.
As wel in body as goost chaste was sche;
For which sche floured in virginité,
With alle humilité and abstinence,
With alle attemperaunce and pacience,
With mesure eek of beryng *and* array.
Discret sche was in answeryng alway,
Though sche were wis *as* Pallas, dar I sayn.
Hir facound eek ful wommanly and playn;
Noon countrefeted termes hadde sche
To seme wys; but after hir degré
Sche spak, and alle hire wordes more and lesse
Sounyng in vertu and in gentilesse.
Schamefast sche was in maydenes schamfastnesse,
Constant in hert, and ever in besynesse,
To dryve hire out of *ydelle* slogardye.
Bachus had of hir mouth no maistrye;
For *wyn* and *youthe* doon Venus encrece,
As men in fuyr wil caste oyle or grece.
And of hir oughne vertu unconstreigned,
Sche hath ful ofte tyme hire seek y-feyned,
For that sche wolde fleen the companye,
Wher likly was to treten of folye,
As is at festes, reveles, and at daunces,
That ben occasiouns of daliaunces.
Such thinges maken children for to be
To soone rype and bold, as men may se,
Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore;
For al to soone may sche lerne lore
Of boldenesse, whan sche is a wyf.
And ye maystresses in youre olde lyf

That lordes doughtres han in governaunce,
Ne taketh of my word no displesaunce;
Think*eth* that *ye* ben set in governynges
Of lordes doughtres, oonly for tuo thinges;
Outher for ye han kept your honesté,
Other elles for ye han falle in freleté,
And knowe wel y-nough the olde daunce,
And conne forsake fully *suche* meschaunce
For evermo; therfore, for Cristes sake,
Kepeth wel tho that ye undertake.
A theof of venesoun, that hath for-laft
His licorousnesse, and al his theves craft,
Can kepe a forest best of every man.
Now kepe h*em* wel, for and ye wil ye can;
Lok*eth* wel, to no vice that ye assent*e*,
Lest ye be dampned for your wikked entent*e*,
For who-so doth, a traytour is certayn;
And taketh keep of that that *I* schal sayn;
Of al tresoun sovereyn pestilence
Is, whan a wight bytrayeth innocence.
Ye fadres, and ye modres eek also,
Though ye han children, be it oon or mo,
Youre is the charge of al her sufferaunce,
Whiles thay be under your governaunce.
Beth war, that by ensample of youre lyvynge,
Outher by necgligence in chastisynge,
That thay ne perische; for I dar wel seye,
If that thay doon, ye schul ful sore abeye.
Under a schepherd softe and necligent,
The wolf hath many a schep and lamb to-rent.
Sufficeth oon ensample now as here,
For I moot turne ayein to my matiere.

This mayde, of which I telle my tale expresse,

So kept hir self, hir nedede no maystresse;
For in hir lyvyng maydens mighte rede,
As in a book, every good word and dede,
That longeth unto a mayden vertuous;
Sche was so prudent and so bounteous.
For which the *fame* outsprong on every syde
Bothe of hir beauté and *hir* bounté wyde;
That thurgh the lond thay praysed hir ilkoone,
That lovede vertu, save envye alloone
That sory is of other mennes wele,
And glad is of his sorwe and unhele.
The doctor made this descripcioun.
This mayde wente upon a day into the toun
Toward the temple, with hir moder deere,
As is of yonge maydenes the manere.

Now was ther *than* a justice in the toun,
That governour was of that regioun.
And so bifel, this juge his eyghen caste
Upon this mayde, avysing hir ful faste,
As sche cam forby ther the juge stood.
Anoon his herte chaunged and his mood,
So was he caught with beauté of this mayde,
And to him-self ful prively he sayde,
'This mayde schal be myn for any man.'
Anoon the feend into his herte ran,
And taughte him sodeinly, by what slighte
This mayde to his purpos wynne he mighte.
For certes, by no fors, ne by no mede,
Him thought he was not able for to speede;
For sché was strong of frendes, and eek sche
Confermed was in such soverayne bounté
That wel he wist he might hir never wynne,
As for to make hir with hir body synne.

For which with gret deliberacioun
He sent after a clerk was in the toun,
The which he knew for subtil and for bold.
This juge unto the clerk his tale hath told
In secré wyse, and made him to assure,
He schulde telle it to no creature;
And if he dede he schulde lese his heed.
Whan that assented was this cursed reed,
Glad was the juge, and made *him goode* cheere,
And yaf him yiftes precious and deere.

Whan schapen was al this conspiracye
Fro poynt to poynt, how that his lecherie
Parformed scholde be ful subtilly,
As ye schul here after-ward openly,
Hom goth this clerk, that highte Claudius.
This false juge, that highte Apius,—
(So was his name, for it is no fable,
But knowen for a storial thing notable;
The sentence of hit soth is out of doute),—
This false jugge goth now fast aboute
To hasten his delit al that he may.
And so bifel, soone after on a day
This false juge, as telleth us the story,
As he was wont, sat in his consistory,
And yaf his domes upon sondry caas;
This false clerk com forth a ful good paas,
And saide, 'Lord, if that it be your wille,
As doth me right upon this pitous bille,
In which I pleyne upon Virginius.
And if he wile seyn it is nought thus,
I wil hit prove and fynde good witnesse,
That soth is that my bille wol expresse.'
The juge answerd, 'Of this in his absence

I may not yive diffinityf sentence.
Let do him calle, and I wol gladly hiere;
Thou schalt have alle right, and no wrong heere.
Virginius com to wite the jugges wille,
And right anoon was red this cursed bille;
The sentence of it was as ye schul heere.
'To yow, my lord sire Apius so deere,
Scheweth youre pore servaunt Claudius,
How that a knight called Virginius,
Ayeins the lawe, ayens alle equyté,
Holdeth, expresse ayeinst the wille of me,
My servaunt, which that my thral is by right,
Which fro myn hous was stolen on a night
Whiles sche was ful yong, that wol I preve
By witnesse, lord, so that ye yow not greve;
Sche is nought his doughter, what-so he say,
Wherfore to yow, my lord the jugge, I pray,
Yelde me my thralle, if that it be your wille.'
Lo, this was al the sentence of the bille.
Virgineus gan upon the clerk byholde;
But hastily, er he his tale tolde,
He wolde have proved it, as schold a knight,
And eek by witnessyng of many a wight,
That al was fals that sayde his adversarie;
This cursed juge wolde no lenger tarye,
Ne heere a word more of Virgineus,
But yaf his jugement, and saide thus;
'I deme anoon this clerk his servaunt have.
Thou schalt no lenger in thin hous hir save.
Go bringe hir forth, and put hir in oure warde.
This clerk schal have his thral; thus I awarde.'
And whan this worthy knight Virgineus,
Thurgh thassent of this juge Apius,

Moste by force his deere doughter yiven
Unto the juge, in lecchery to lyven,
He goth him hom, and sette him in his halle,
And leet anoon his deere doughter calle;
And with a face deed as aisshen colde,
Upon hir humble face he gan byholde,
With fadres pité stiking thorugh his herte,
Al wolde he from his purpos not converte.
'Doughter,' quod he, 'Virginea be thy name,
Ther ben tuo weyes, eyther deth or schame,
That thou moste suffre, alas that I was bore!
For never thou deservedest wherfore
To deyen with a swerd or with a knyf.
O deere doughter, ender of my lif,
Which I have fostred up with such plesaunce,
That thou ne were oute of my remembraunce;
O doughter, which that art my laste wo,
And in this lif my laste joye also,
O gemme of chastité, in pacience
Tak thou thy deth, for this is my sentence;
For love and not for hate thou moste be deed,
My pitous hond mot smyten of thin heed.
Allas that ever Apius the say!
Thus hath he falsly jugged the to day.'
And told hir al the caas, as ye bifore
Han herd, it nedeth nought to telle it more.
'Mercy, deere fader,' quod this mayde.
And with that word sche bothe hir armes layde
Aboute his nekke, as sche was wont to doo,
(The teeres brast out of hir eyghen tuo),
And sayde: 'Goode fader, schal I dye?
Is ther no grace? is ther no remedye?'
'No, certeyn, deere doughter myn,' quod he.

'Than yeve me leve, fader myn,' quod sche,
'My deth for to compleyne a litel space;
For pardy Jeffta yaf his doughter grace
For to compleyne, er he hir slough, allas!
And God it woot, no thing was hir trespas,
But that sche ran hir fader first to se,
To welcome him with gret solempnité.'
And with that word aswoun sche fel anoon,
And after, whan hir swownyng was agoon,
Sche riseth up, and to hir fader sayde;
'Blessed be God, that I schal deye a mayde.
Yeve me my deth, er that I have a schame.
Do with your child your wille, a goddes name!'
And with that word sche prayed him ful ofte,
That with his swerd he schulde smyte hir softe;
And with that word on swoune doun sche fel.
Hir fader, with ful sorwful hert and fel,
Hir heed of smoot, and by the top it hente,
And to the juge bigan it to presente,
As he sat in his doom in consistory.
And whan the juge it say, as saith the story,
He bad take him, and honge him *also*-faste.
But right anoon alle the poeple in thraste
To save the knight, for routhe and for pité,
For knowen was the fals iniquité.
The poeple anoon had*de* suspect in this thing,
By maner of this clerkes chalengyng,
That it was by thassent of Apius;
They wiste wel that he was leccherous.
For which unto this Apius thay goon,
And casten him in prisoun right anoon,
Wher as he slough himself; and Claudius,
That servaunt was unto this Apius,

Was demed for to honge upon a tree;
But Virgineus of his gret pité
Prayde for him, that he was exiled,
And elles certes he had*de* ben bigiled.
The remenaunt were anhanged, more and lesse,
That were consented to this cursednesse.
Her may*e* men se how synne hath his merite;
Be war, for no man woot how God wol smyte
In no degré, ne in which maner wise
The worm of conscience wol arise
Of wicked lyf, though it so pryvé be,
That no man woot of it but God and he;
Whether that he be lewed man or lered,
He not how soone that he may be afered.
Therfore I rede yow this counseil take,
Forsakith synne, er synne yow forsake.

THE PROLOGE OF THE PARDONER.

WRE Ost gan swere as he were wood;
'Harrow!' quod he, 'by nayles and by blood!
This was a cursed thef, a fals justice.
As schendful deth as herte can devise
So falle upon his body and his boones!
The devel I bykenne him al at oones!
Allas! to deere boughte sche hir beauté.
Wherfore I say, that alle men maye se,
That yiftes of fortune or of nature
Ben cause of deth of many a creature.
Hir beauté was hir deth, I dar wel sayn;
Allas! so pitously as sche was slayn?
Bot here of wil I nouht procede as nowe,
Men have ful often more harme than prowe.
'But trewely, myn owne maister deere,
This was a pitous tale for to heere;
But natheles, pas over, this is no fors.
I pray to God to save thi gentil corps,
And thine urinales, and thi jordanes,
Thine Ypocras, and thine Galiounes,
And every boist ful of thi letuarie,
God blesse hem and oure lady seinte Marie!
So mot I then, thou art a propre man,
And y-lik a prelat, by seint Runyan.
Sayde I *not* wel? can I not speke in terme?
But wel I woot, thou dost myn herte *to* erme,
I have almost y-caught a cardiacle;

By corpus boones, but-*yf* I have triacle,
Other elles a draught of moyst and corny ale,
Other but I hiere anoon a mery tale,
Myn hert is broste for pité of that mayde.
Thow, pardoner, thou, *belamy*,' he sayde,
'Tel us a tale, for thou canst many oon.'
'It schal be doon,' quod he, 'and that anoon
But first,' quod he, 'her at this ale-stake
I wil *bothe* drynke and byten on a cake.'
But right anoon the gentils gan to crie,
'Nay, let him tellen us no ribaudye.
Tel us som moral thing, that we may leere.'
'Gladly,' quod he, and sayde as ye schal heere.
'But in the cuppe wil I me bethinke
Upon some honest tale, whil that I drinke.'—
'Lordyngs,' quod he, 'in chirches whan I preche,
I peyne me to have an hauteyn speche,
And ryng it out, as lowd as doth a belle,
For I can al by rote *which* that I telle.
My teeme is alway oon, and ever was;
Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas.
'First I pronounce whennes that I come,
And thanne my bulles schewe I alle and some;
Oure liege lordes seal upon my patent,
That schewe I first my body to warent,
That no man be so hardy, prest ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk.
And after that than tel I forth my tales.
Bulles of popes, and of cardynales,
Of patriarkes, and of bisshops, I schewe,
And in Latyn speke I wordes fewe
To savore with my predicacioun,
And for to stere *men* to devocioun.

Thanne schewe I forth my longe crystal stoones,
I-crammed ful of cloutes and of boones,
Reliks thay ben, as wene thei echoon.
Than have I in latoun a schulder boon,
Which that was of an holy Jewes scheep.
Good men,' say I, 'tak of my wordes keep;
If that this boon be waische in eny welle,
If cow, or calf, or scheep, or oxe swelle,
That eny worm hath ete, or worm i-stonge,
Tak water of that welle, and waisch his tonge,
And it is hool anoon. And forthermore
Of pokkes, and of scabbe, and every sore,
Schal every scheep be hool, that of this welle
Drynketh a draught. Tak heed eek what I telle;
If that the goode man, that the beest oweth,
Wol every wike, er that the cok him croweth,
Fastynge, drynke of this welle a draughte,
As thilke holy Jew oure eldres taughte,
His beestes and his stoor schal multiplie.
And, sires, also it kelith jalousie.
For though a man be ful in jalous rage,
Let make with this water his potage,
And never schal he more his wyf mystriste,
Though he the soth of hir defaute wiste;
Al hadde sche take prestes tuo or thre.
Her is a meteyn eek, that ye maye see;
He that his honde put in this metayn,
He schal have multiplying of *his* grayn,
Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes,
So that ye offre pans or elles grootes.
And, men and wommen, oon thing warne I yow;
If eny wight be in this chirche now,
That hath doon synne orrible, that he

Dar nought for schame of it schryven be;
Or ony womman, be sche yong or old,
That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold,
Suche folk schal have no power ne grace
To offre to my relikes in this place.
And who so fint him out of suche blame,
Thay wol come up and offre in Goddes name,
And I assoile hem by the auctorité,
Which that by bulle was i-graunted me.
'By this gaude have I wonne every yeer
An hundred mark, syn I was pardoner.
I stonde lik a clerk in my pulpit,
And whan the lewed poeple is doun i-set,
I preche so as ye have herd before,
And telle hem an hondred japes more.
Than peyne I me to strecche forth my necke,
And est and west upon the poeple I bekke,
As doth a dowfe, syttyng on a berne;
Myn hondes and my tonge goon so yerne,
That it is joye to se my busynesse.
Of avarice and of such cursednesse
Is al my preching, for to make hem fre
To yeve here pans, and namely unto me.
For myn entent is nought but for to wynne,
And no thing for correccioun of synne.
I rekke never when thay ben i-beryed,
Though that here soules gon a blakeberyed.
'For certes many a predicacioun
Cometh ofte tyme of evel entencioun;
Som for plesauns of folk and flaterie,
To ben avaunced by ypocrisie;
And som for veine gloir, and som for hate.
For whan I dar not other weys debate,

Than wil I stynge him with my tonge smerte
In preching, so that he schal not asterte
To be diffamed falsly, if that he
Hath trespast to my bretheren or to me.
For though I telle not his propre name,
Men schal wel knowe that it is the same
By signes, and by other circumstaunces.
Thus quyt I folk, that doon us displesaunces;
Thus put I out my venym under hiewe
Of holynes, to seme holy and trewe.
But schortly myn entent I wol devyse,
I preche no thing but of coveityse.
Therfor my teem is yit, and ever was,
Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas.

'Thus can I preche agayn the same vice
Which that I use, and that is avarice.
But though myself be gulty in the synne,
Yit can I make othere folk to twynne
From avarice, and soone to repente,
But that is not my principal entente;
I preche no thing but for coveitise.
Of this matier it ought i-nough suffise.

'Than telle I hem ensamples many oon
Of olde *stories* longe tyme agoon.
For lewed poeple loven tales olde;
Which thinges can thay wel report and holde.
What? trowe ye, whiles *that* I may preche
And wynne gold and silver for I teche,
That I wil lyve in povert wilfully?
Nay, nay, I thought it never trewely.
For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes.
I wil *not* do no labour with myn hondes,
Ne make basketis and lyve therby,

Bycause I wil nought begge ydelly.
I wol noon of thapostles counterfete;
I wol have money, wolle, chese, and whete,
Al were it yeven of the prestes page,
Or of the porest wydow in a village,
Al schold hir children sterve for famyn.
Nay, I wol drinke licour of the wyn,
And have a joly wenche in every toun.
But herkneth, lordynges, *in* conclusioun,
Youre likyng is that I schal telle a tale.
Now have I dronk a draught of corny ale,
By God, I hope I schal telle yow a thing,
That schal by resoun be at your liking;
For though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yit I yow telle can,
Which I am wont to preche, for to wynne.
Now hold your pees, my tale I wol byginne.'

THE PARDONERES TALE.

IN Flaundres whilom was a companye
Of yonge folkes, that hauntede folye,
As ryot, hasard, stywes, and tavernes;
Wher as with lutes, harpes, and gyternes,
Thay daunce and play at dees, bothe day and night,
And ete also, and drynk over her might;
Thurgh which thay doon the devyl sacrifise
Withinne the develes temple, in cursed wise,
By superfluité abhominable.
Her othes been so greet and so dampnable,

That it is grisly for to hiere hem swere.
Our blisful Lordes body thay to-tere;
Hem thoughte Jewes rent him nought y-nough;
And ech of hem at otheres synne lough.
And right anoon ther come tombl*e*steris,
Fetis and smal, and yonge fruytsteris,
Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
Whiche that ben verray develes officeres,
To kyndle and blowe the fuyr of leccherie,
That is anexid unto glotonye.
The holy wryt take I to my witnesse,
That luxury is in wyn and dronkenesse.
Lo, how that dronken Loth unkyndely
Lay by his doughtres tuo unwityngly,
So dronk he was he niste what he wrought*e*.
Herodes, who-so wel the story sought*e*,
Whan he of wyn was repleet at his fest,
Right at his oughne table yaf his hest
To sle the baptist Johan ful gilteles.
Seneca seith a good word douteles;
He saith he can no difference fynde
Betuyx a man that is out of his mynde,
And a man the which is dronkelewe;
But that woodnes, fallen in a schrewe,
Persevereth lenger than doth dronkenesse.
O glutonye, ful of corsidnesse;
O cause first of oure confusioun,
O original of oure dampnacioun,
Til Crist had*de* bought us with his blood agayn!
Lo*keth*, how dere, *and* schortly for to sayn,
Abought was first this cursed felonye;
Corupt was al this world for glotonye.
Adam our fader, and his wyf also,

Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
Were dryven for that vice, it is no drede.
For whils that Adam fasted, as I rede,
He was in Paradis, and whan that he
Eet of the fruyt defendit of a tre,
He was out cast to wo and into peyne.
O glotony, wel ought us on the pleyne!
O, wist a man how many maladyes
Folwith of excesse and of glotonyes,
He wolde be the more mesurable
Of his diete, sittyng at his table.
Allas! the schorte throte, the tendre mouth,
Maketh the Est and West, *and* North and South,
In erthe, in watir, in ayer, man to swynke,
To gete a sely glotoun mete and drynke.
Of this matier, O Poul, wel canstow trete.
Mete unto wombe, and wombe *eke* unto mete,
Schal God destroyen bothe, as Powel saith.
Allas! a foul thing is it by my faith
To saye this word, and fouler is the dede,
Whan men so drynke*th* of the whyt and rede,
That of his throte he makith his privé
Thurgh thilke cursed superfluité.
Thapostil wepyng saith ful pitously,
Ther walkith many, of which you told have I,
I say it now wepyng with pitous vois,
T*here* are enemeyes of Cristes croys;
Of which the ende is deth, wombe is her God.
O wombe, o bely, o stynkyng is thi cod,
Fulfild of dong and of corrupcioun;
At eyther ende of the foul is the soun.
How gret cost and labour is the to fynde!
These cokes how they stamp, and streyn, and grynde,

And torne substaunce into accident,
To fulfille *al* thy licorous talent!
Out of the harde boones gete thay
The mary, for thay caste nought away
That may go thurgh the golet softe and soote;
Of spicery and levys, bark and roote,
Schal ben his sause maad to his delyt
To make him have a new*er*e appetit.
But certes he that haunteth suche delices,
Is deed ther whiles that he lyveth in vices.
A licorous thing is wyn, and dronkenesse
Is ful of stryvyng and of wrecchednesse.
O dronk*en* man, disfigured is thi face,
Sour is thy breth, foul artow to embrace;
And thurgh thi dronken *no*se sowneth the soun,
As though thou seydest ay, Sampsoun, Sampsoun;
And yit, God wot, Sampson drank never wyn.
Thow fallist, as it were a stiked swyn;
Thy tonge is lost, and al thin honest cure,
For dronkenes is verray sepulture
Of mannes witt and his discrecioun,
In whom that drynk hath dominacioun.
He can no counseil kepe, it is no drede.
N*ow* keep yow from the white and from the rede,
Namely fro the white wyn of Leepe,
That is to selle in Fleetstreet or in Chepe.
This wyn of Spayne crepith subtily
In other wynes growyng faste by,
Of which ther riseth such fumosité,
That whan a man hath dronke draughtes thre,
And weneth that he be at hom in Chepe,
He is in Spayne, right at the toun of Lepe,
Nought at the Rochel, ne at Burdeaux toun;

And thanne wol thai say, Sampsoun, Sampsoun.
But herken, lordyngs, o word, I you praye,
That alle the soverayn actes, dar I saye,
Of victories in the Olde Testament,
Thorugh the verray God omnipotent
Were doon in abstinence and in prayere;
Lokith the Bible, and ther ye may it hiere.
Loke Atthila the grete conquerour,
Deyd in his sleep, with schame and dishonour,
Bleedyng ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
A captayn schuld ay lyve in sobrenesse.
And over al this, avyse yow right wel,
What was comaunded unto Lamuel;
Nought Samuel, but Lamuel say I.
Redith the Bible, and fyndeth expresly
Of wyn yevyng to hem that han justice.
No more of this, for it may wel suffice.
And now I have *i*-spoke of glotonye,
Now wil I yow defende hasardrye.
Hasard is verray moder of lesynges,
And of deceipt of cursed forsweringes;
Blaspheme of Crist, manslaught, and wast also
Of catel, and of tyme; *and* forthermo
It is reproef, and contrair to honour,
For to be halde a comun hasardour.
And ever the heyer he is of astaat,
The more is he holden desolaat.
If that a prince use hasardrie,
In alle governance and policie
He is, as by comun opinioun,
Holde the lasse in reputacioun.
Stilbon, that was i-holde a wis embasitour,
Was sent unto Corinthe with gret honour

Fro Lacidome, to make hir alliaunce;
And whan he cam, him happede *par chaunce*,
That alle the grettest that were of that lond
Playing atte hasard he hem fond.
For which, as soone as it mighte be,
He stal him hoom ayein to his contré,
And saide ther, 'I nyl nought lese my name,
I nyl not take on me so gret diffame,
Yow for to allie unto noon hasardoures.
Sendeth othere wiser embasitoures,
For by my trouthe, me were lever dye,
Than I yow scholde to hasardours allye.
For ye, that ben so glorious in honoures,
Schal not allie yow with hasardoures,
As by my wil, ne as by my treté.'
This wise philosophre thus sayd he.

Loke eek that *to* the king Demetrius
The king of Parthes, as the book saith us,
Sent him a paire dees of gold in scorn,
For he had used hasard ther to-forn;
For which he hield his gloir and his renoun
At no valieu or reputacioun.
Lordes maye fynde other maner play
Honest y-nough to dryve away the day.

Now wol I speke of othes fals and grete
A word or tuo, as other bookes entrete.
Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
And fals swering is more reprovable.
The hyhe God forbad sweryng at al,
Witnes on Mathew; but in special
Of sweryng saith the holy Jeremye,
Thou schalt say soth thin othes, and not lye;
And swere in doom, and eek in rightwisnes;

But ydel sweryng is a cursednes.
Bihold and se, ther in the firste table
Of hihe Goddes heste honurable,
How that the secounde heste *of him* is this;
Tak not in ydel ne *my* name amys.
Lo, he rather forbedith such sweryng,
Than homicide, or many a corsed thing.
I say as by order thus it stondith;
This knoweth he that the hestes understondeth.
How that the second hest of God is that.
And forthermore, I wol the telle a plat,
The vengance schal not parte fro his hous,
That of his othes is outrageous.
'By Goddis precious hert, and by by his nayles,
And by the blood of Crist, that is in Hayles,
Seven is my chaunce, and also cink and tray!
By Goddes armes, and thou falsly play,
This daggere schal thurgh thin herte goo!'
This fruyt cometh of the bicchid boones tuo,
Forswering, ire, falsnes, homicide.
Now for the love of Crist that for us dyde,
Leveth youre othis, bothe gret and smale.
But, sires, now wol I telle forth my tale.
These riottours thre, of which I you telle,
Longe erst than prime rong eny belle,
Were set hem in a tavern for to drynke;
And as thay satte, thay herd a belle clinke
Biforn a corps, was caried to the grave;
That oon of hem gan calle unto his knave,
'Go bet,' quoth he, 'and axe redily,
What corps is that, that passeth her forthby;
And loke that thou reporte his name wel.'
'Sire,' quod he, 'but that nedeth never a del;

It was me told er ye com heer tuo houres;
He was, pardy, an old felaw of youres,
And sodeinly he was i-slayn to night;
For dronk as he sat on his bench upright,
Ther com a privé thef, men clepen Deth,
That in this contré al the peple sleth;
And with his spere he smot his hert a-tuo,
And went his way withoute wordes mo.
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence.
And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
Me thinketh that it is ful necessarie,
For to be war of such an adversarie;
Beth redy for to meete him evermore.
Thus taughte me my dame, I say nomore.'
'By seinte Mary!' sayde this taverner,
'The child saith soth; for he hath slayn this yeer
Hens over a myle, withinne a gret village,
Bothe man and womman, child, *and hyne,* and page;
I trowe his habitacioun be there.
To ben avysed gret wisdom it were,
Er that he dede a man that dishonour.'
'Ye, Goddis armes!' quod this ryottour,
'Is it such peril with him for to meete?
I schal him seeke by way and eek by strete,
I make avow to Goddis digne boones!
Herkneth, felaws, we thre ben al oones;
Let ech of us hold up his hond to other,
And ech of us bycome otheres brother,
And we wil slee this false traitour Deth;
He schal be slayne, that so many sleeth,
By Goddis digneté, er it be night!'
Togideres han these thre here trouthes plight
To lyve and deye ech of he*m* with other,

As though he were his oughne sworne brother.
And up thai startyn, al dronke in this rage,
And forth thai goon towardes that village,
Of which the taverner hath spoke biforn,
And many a grisly oth than han thay sworn,
And Cristes blessed body thay to-rente,
Deth schal be deed, if that they may him hente.
Right as thay wolde have torned over a style,
Whan thai han goon nought fully *half* a myle,
An old man and a pore with hem mette.
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,
And saide thus, 'Lordynges, God yow se!'
The proudest of the ryotoures thre
Answerd ayein, 'What? carle, with *sory grace*,
Why artow al for-wrapped save thi face?
Whi lyvest thou *longe* in so gret an age?'
This olde man gan loke on his visage
And saide thus, 'For that I can not fynde
A man, though that I walke into Inde,
Neither in cité noon, ne in village,
That wol chaunge his youthe for myn age;
And therfore moot I have myn age stille
As longe tyme as it is Goddes wille.
And Deth, allas! ne wil not have my lif.
Thus walk I lik a resteles caytif,
And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
I knokke with my staf, erly and late,
And saye, 'Leeve moder, let me in.
Lo, how I wane, fleisch, and blood, and skyn.
Allas! whan schuln my boones ben at rest?
Moder, with yow wil I chaunge my chest,
That in my chamber longe tyme hath *i*-be,
Ye, for an haire clout to wrap-in me.'

But yet to me sche wol not do that grace,
For which ful pale and welkid is my face.
But, sires, to yow it is no curtesye
To speke unto an old man vilonye,
But he trespas in word or elles *in* dede.
In holy writ ye may your self wel rede,
Ayens an old man, hoor upon his hede,
Ye schold arise; wherefor I yow rede,
Ne doth unto an old man more harm now,
Namore than ye wolde men dede to yow
In age, if that ye may so long abyde.
And God be with you, wherso ye go or ryde!
I moot go thider as I have to goo.'
'Nay, olde cherl, by God! thou schalt not so,'
Sayde that other hasardour anoon;
'Thou partist nought so lightly, by seint Johan!
Thou spake right now of *thilke* traitour Deth,
That in this contré alle oure frendes sleth;
Have her my trouth, as thou art his aspye;
Tel wher he is, or elles thou schalt dye,
By God and by that holy sacrament!
For sothly thou art oon of his assent
To *slene* us yonge folk, thou false theef.'
'Now, sires, than if that yow be so leef
To fynde Deth, torn up this croked way,
For in that grove I laft him, by my fay,
Under a tree, and ther he wil abyde;
Ne for your bost he nyl him no thing hyde.
Se ye that ook? right ther ye schuln him fynde.
God save yow, that bought ayein mankynde,
And yow amend.' Thus sayde this olde man,
And everich of these riotoures ran,
Til thay come to the tre, and ther thay founde

Of florins fyn of gold y-coyned rounde,
Wel neygh a seven busshels, as hem thoughte.
No lenger thanne after Deth thay soughte;
But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
For that the florens so faire were and brighte,
That doun thai sette hem by that precious hord.
The yongest of hem spak the firste word.
'Bretheren,' quod he, 'take keep what I schal saye;
My witte is gret, though that I bourde and playe.
This tresour hath fortune to us yiven
In mirth and jolyté our lif to lyven,
And lightly as it comth, so wil we spende.
Ey, Goddis precious dignité! who wende
To day, that we schuld have so fair a grace?
But mighte this gold be caried fro this place
Hom to myn hous, or ellis unto youres,
(For wel I wot that this gold is nought oures),
Than were we in heyh felicité.
But trewely by day it may not be;
Men wolde saye that we were theves stronge,
And for oure tresour doon us for to honge.
This tresour moste caried be by nighte
As wysly and as slely as it mighte.
Wherfore I rede, that cut among us alle
Be drawe, and let se wher the cut wil falle;
And he that hath the cut, with herte blithe
Schal renne to the toun, and that ful swithe,
To bring us bred and wyn ful prively;
And tuo of us schal kepe subtilly
This tresour wel; and if he wil not tarie,
Whan it is night, we wol this tresour carie
By oon assent, ther as us liketh best.'
That oon of hem the cut brought in his fest,

And bad hem drawe and loke wher it wil falle;
And it fel on the yongest of hem alle;
And forth toward the toun he went anoon.
And al-so soone as he was agoon,
That oon of hem spak thus unto that other;
'Thow wost wel that thou art my sworne brother.
Thy profyt wol I telle the anoon.
Thow wost wel that our felaw is agoon,
And her is gold, and that ful gret plenté,
That schal departed be among us thre.
But natheles, if I can schape it so,
That it departed were bitwix us tuo,
Hadde I not doon a frendes torn to the?'
That other answerd, 'I not how that may be;
He wot wel that the gold is with us twaye.
What schulde we than do? what schulde we saye?'
'Schal it be counsail?' sayde the ferste schrewe,
'And I schal telle the in wordes fewe
What we schul doon, and bringe it wel aboute.'
'I graunte,' quod that other, 'withoute doute,
That by my trouthe I wil the nought bywraye.'
'Now,' quod the first, 'thou wost wel we ben twaye,
And two of us schuln strenger be than oon.'
Loke, whanne he is sett, and that anoon
Arys, as *though* thou woldest with him pleye;
And I schal ryf him thurgh the sydes tweye,
Whils thou strogelest with him as in game,
And with thi dagger loke thou do the same;
And than schal al the gold departed be,
My dere frend, bitwixe the and me;
Than may we oure lustes *al* fulfille,
And play at dees right at our owne wille.'
And thus accorded ben these schrewes twayn,

To sle the thridde, as ye *han* herd me sayn.
This yongest, which that wente to the toun,
Ful fast in hert he rollith up and doun
The beauté of the florins newe and brighte;
'O Lord!' quod he, 'if so were that I mighte
Have al this gold unto my self alloone,
Ther is no man that lyveth under the troone
Of God, that schulde lyve so mery as I.'
And atte last the feend, oure enemy,
Put in his thought, that he schulde poysoun beye,
With which he mighte sle his felawes tweye.
For-why, the feend fond him in such lyvynge,
That he hadde leve to sorwe him to brynge.
For this witterly was his *ful* entente
To slen hem bothe, and never to repente.
And forth he goth, no lenger wold he tarye,
Into the toun unto a potecarye,
And prayde him that he him wolde selle
Som poysoun, that he might his rattis quelle.
And eek ther was a polkat in his hawe,
That, as he sayde, his capouns had i-slawe;
And said he wold him wreke, if that he mighte,
On vermyn, that destroyed him by nighte.
Thapotecary answerd: 'And thou schalt have
A thing that, also God my soule save,
In al this world ther nys no creature,
That ete or dronk had of this confecture,
Nought but the mountaunce of a corn of whete,
That he ne schuld his lif anoon for-lete;
Ye, sterve he schal, and that in lasse while,
Than thou wilt goon a paas not but a myle,
The poysoun is so strong and violent.'
This cursed man hath in his hond i-hent

This poysoun in a box, and sins he ran
Into the nexte stret unto a man,
And borwed him large botelés thre;
And in the two his poysoun poured he;
The thrid he kepedé clene for his drynke,
For al the night he schop him for to swynke
In carying the gold out of that place.
And whan this riotour, with sory grace,
Hath fillid with wyn his *grete* botels thre,
To his felaws ayein repaireth he.

What nedith it therof to sermoun more?
For right as thay haddé cast his deth bifore,
Right so thay han him slayn, and that anoon.
And whan this was i-doon, thus spak that oon:
'Now let us drynk and sitte, and make us mery
And siththen we wil his body bery.'
And afterward it happed him *par cas*,
To take the botel ther the poysoun was,
And drank, and yaf his felaw drink also,
For which anon thay stervedé bothe tuo.
But certes I suppose that Avycen
Wrot never in canoun, ne in non fen,
Mo wonder sorwes of empoisonyng,
Than hadde these wrecches tuo or here endyng.
Thus endid been these homicides tuo,
And eek the fals empoysoner also.

O cursedé synne ful of cursednesse!
O traytorous homicidy! O wikkednesse!
O glotony, luxurie, and hasardrye!
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vilanye,
And othes grete, of usage and of pride!
Allas! mankynde, how may it bytyde,
That to thy creatour, which that the wroughté,

And with his precious herte-blood the boughte,
Thou art so fals and so unkynde, allas!
'Now, good men, God foryeve yow your trespas,
And ware yow fro the synne of avarice.
Myn holy pardoun may you alle warice,
So that ye offren noblis or starlinges,
Or elles silver spones, broches, or rynges,
Bowith your hedes under this holy bulle.
Cometh forth, ye wyves, and offreth your wolle;
Your names I entre her in my rolle anoon;
Into the blis of heven schul ye goon;
I yow assoile by myn heyh power,
If ye woln offre, as clene and eek als cler
As ye were born. And, sires, lo, thus I preche;
And Jhesu Crist, that is oure soules leche,
So graunte yow his pardoun to receyve;
For that is best, I wil not yow disceyve.
But, sires, o word foryat I in my tale;
I have reliks and pardoun in my male,
As fair as eny man in Engelond,
Which were me yeve by *the* popes hond.
If eny of yow wol of devocioun
Offren, and have myn absolucioun,
Cometh forth an*on*, knelith her adoun,
And ye schul have here my pardoun.
Or elles takith pardoun, as ye wende,
Al newe and freissch at every townes ende,
So that ye offren alway new and newe
Nobles and pens, which that ben good and trewe.
It is an honour to every that is heer,
That ye may have a suffisaunt pardoner
Tassoile yow in contre as ye ryde,
For aventures which that may bytyde.

For paraunter ther may falle oon, or tuo,
Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke a-tuo.
Loke, such a seureté is to you alle
That I am in your felaschip i-falle,
That may assoyle you bothe more or lasse,
Whan that the soule schal fro the body passe.
I rede that oure hoste schal bygynne,
For he is most envoliped in synne.
Com forth, sire ost, and offer first anoon,
And thou schalt kisse the reliquis everichoon,
Ye, for a grote; unbocle *anone* thi purs.'
'Nay, nay,' quod he, 'than have I Cristes curs!
Let be,' quod he, 'it schal not be, so theech.
Thou woldest make me kisse thin olde breech,
And swere it were a relik of a seynt,
Though it were with thy foundement depeynt.
But by the cros, which that seynt Heleyn fond,
I wold I had*de* thy coylons in myn hond,
In stede of reliks, or of seintuary.
Let cut hem of, I wol help hem to cary;
Thay schul be schryned in an hogges tord.'
This Pardoner answerde nat o word;
So wroth he was, he wolde no word saye.
'Now,' quod oure Host, 'I wol no lenger playe
With the, ne with noon other angry man.'
But right anoon this worthy Knight bygan,
(Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough)
'No more of this, for it is right y-nough.
Sir pardoner, be glad and mery of cheere;
And ye, sir host, that ben to me so deere,
I pray yow that ye kisse the pardoner;
And pardoner, I pray yow draweth yow ner,
And as we dede, let us laugh and playe.'
Anon thay kisse, and riden forth her waye.

THE SCHIPMANNES PROLOGE.

UR Ost upon his styrops stode anoon,
And seyde, 'Good men, herkneth everichoon,
This was a thrifty tale for the noones.
Sire parissh prest,' quod he, 'for Goddes boones,
Tel *us* a tale, as was thy forward yore;
I see wel that ye lered men in lore
Can mochel good, by Goddes dignité.'
The Person him answerde: '*Benedicite!*
What eyleth the man, so synfully to swere?'
Our Ost answerd: 'O Jankyn, be ye there?
Now, goode men,' quod our Oste, 'herkneth me.
I smel a loller in the wind,' quod he,
'*Abideth for Goddes digne passion,*
For we schul have a predicacion;
This loller heer wolde prechen us somwhat.'
'Nay by my father soule! that schal he nat,'
Sayde the *Schipman*; 'heer schal he naught preche,
He schal no gospel *glosen* heer ne teche.
We levyn al in the gret God,' quod he.
'He wolde *sowen* som difficulté,
Or springen cokkil in our clene corn.
And therfor, Ost, I warne the byforn,
My joly body schal a tale telle,
[And I schal clinken you so mery a belle,
That I schal waken al this compagnie;
But it schal not ben of philosophie,

Ne of physike, ne termes queinte of lawe;
Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe.']

THE SCHIPMANNES TALE.

A MARCHAUNT whilom dwelled at Seint Denys,
That riche was, for which men hild him wys.
A wyf he had of excellent beauté,
And companable, and reverent was sche;
Which is a thing that causeth more despence,
Than worth is al the cher and reverence
That men doon hem at festes or at daunces.
Such salutaciouns and continaunces
Passeth, as doth the schadow on a wal;
But wo is him that paye moot for al.
The sely housbond algat moste paye,
He most us clothe in ful good arraye
Al for his oughne worschip richely;
In which array we daunce jolily.
And if that he may not, paraventure,
Or elles wil not such dispens endure,
But thynketh it is wasted and i-lost,
Than moot another paye for oure cost,
Or lene us gold, and that is perilous.
This worthy marchaunt huld a noble hous,
For which he hadde alday gret repair
For his largesce, and for his wyf was fair.
What wonder is? but herkneth to my tale.

Amonges al these gestes gret and smale,
Ther was a monk, a fair man and a bold,
I trowe, thritty wynter he was old,
That ever in oon was drawyng to that place.
This yonge monk, that was so fair of face,
Aqueynted was so with the goode man,
Sithen that her firste knowleche bygan,
That in his hous as familier was he
As it possibil is a frend to be.
And for as mochil as this goode man
And eek this monk, of which that I bygan,
Were bothe tuo i-born in oon village,
The monk him claymeth, as for cosynage;
And he ayein *him* saith nat oones nay,
But was as glad therof, as foul of day,
For to his hert it was a gret plesaunce.
Thus ben thay knyt with eterne alliaunce,
And ilk of hem gan other to assure
Of brotherhed, whil that her lif may dure.
Fre was daun Johan, and manly of despence
As in that hous, and ful of diligence
To do plesaunce, and also gret costage;
He nought foryat to yeve the leste page
In al that hous; but, after her degré,
He yaf the lord, and siththen his meyné,
Whan that he com, som maner honest thing;
For which thay were as glad of his comyng
As foul is fayn, whan that the sonne upriseth.
No mor of this as now, for it suffiseth.

But so bifel, this marchaunt on a day
Schop him to make redy his array
Toward the toun of Bruges for to fare,
To byen ther a porcioun of ware;

For which he hath to Paris sent anoon
A messanger, and prayed hath dan Johan
That he schulde come to Seint Denys, and playe
With him, and with his wyf, a day or twaye,
Er he to Brigges went, in alle wise.
This nobil monk, of which I yow devyse,
Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,
(Bycause he was a man of heih prudence,
And eek an officer) out for to ryde,
To se her graunges and her bernes wyde;
And unto Seint Denys he cometh anoon.
Who was so welcome as my lord dan Johan,
Oure deere cosyn, ful of curtesie?
With him brought he a jubbe of malvesie,
And eek another ful of wyn vernage,
And volantyn, as ay was his usage;
And thus I lete hem ete, and drynk, and playe,
This marchaunt and this monk, a day or twaye.

The thridde day this marchaund up he riseth,
And on his needes sadly him avyseth;
And up into his countour hous goth he,
To rekyn with him-self, as wel may be,
Of thilke yer, how that it with him stood,
And how that he dispended had his good,
And if that he encresced were or noon.
His bookes and his bagges many oon
He hath byforn him on his counter bord,
For riche was his tresor and his hord;
For which ful fast his countour dore he schette;
And eek he wolde no man schold him lette
Of his accomptes, for the mene-tyme;
And thus he sat, til it was passed prime.

Dan Johan was risen in the morn also,

And in the gardyn walkith to and fro.
And hath his thinges said ful curteisly.
This good wyf com walkyng ful prively
Into *the* gardyn, ther he walketh softe,
And him salueth, as sche hath doon ful ofte.
A mayde child com in hir compaignie,
Which as hir list sche may governe and gye,
For yit under the yerde was the mayde.
'O dere cosyn myn, dan Johan,' sche sayde,
'What ayleth yow so rathe to arise?'
'Nece,' quod he, 'it aught y-nough suffise
Fyve houres for to slepe *upon* a night;
But it were for eny old palled wight,
As ben these weddid men, that lye and dare,
As in a forme ther lith a wery hare,
Were al for-straught with houndes gret and smale.
But, dere nece, why be ye so pale?
I trowe certis, that oure goode man
Hath on yow laborid, sith the night bygan,
That yow were nede to resten hastiliche.'
And with that word he lowgh ful meriliche,
And of his owne thought he *wex* al reed.
This faire wyf bygan to schake hir heed,
And sayde thus, 'Ye, God wot al,' quod sche.
'Nay, cosyn myn, it stant not so with me.
For by that God, that yaf me soule and lif,
In al the reme of Fraunce is ther no wyf
That lasse lust hath to that sory play;
For I may synge allas and waylaway
That I was born; but to no wight,' quod sche,
'Dar I not telle how it stont with me.
Wherfor I think out of this lond to wende,
Or elles of my-self to make an ende,

So ful am I of drede and eek of care.'
This monk bygan upon this wyf to stare;
And sayd, 'Allas! my nece, God forbede,
That ye for eny sorw, or eny drede,
Fordo your self; but telleth me your greef,
Paraventure I may in youre mescheef
Councel or help; and therfor telleth me
Al your annoy, for it schal be secré.
For on my portos *here* I make an oth,
That never in my lif, for lief ne loth,
Ne schal I of no counseil you bywraye.'
'The same ayein,' quod sche, 'to yow I saye.
By God and by this portos wil I swere,
Though men me wolde al in peces tere,
Ne schal I never, for to go to helle,
Bywreye *a* word of thing that ye me telle,
Not for no cosynage, ne alliaunce,
But verrayly for love and affiaunce.'
Thus ben thay sworn, and herupon i-kist,
And ilk of hem told other what hem list.
'Cosyn,' quod sche, 'if that I had a space,
As I have noon, and namly in this place,
Then wold I telle a legend of my lyf,
What I have suffred sith I was a wyf
With myn housbond, though he be your cosyn.'
'Nay,' quod this monk, 'by God and seint Martyn!
He *nis* no more cosyn unto me,
Than is this leef that hongeth on the tre;
I cleped him so, by seint Denis of Fraunce,
To have the more cause of acqueyntaunce
Of yow, which I have loved specially
Aboven alle wommen sikerly;
This swere I yow on my professioun.

Tellith youre greef, lest that he come adoun,
And hasteth yow; and goth your way anoon.'
'My deere love,' quod sche, 'O dan Johan!
Ful leef me were this counseil *for* to hyde,
But out it moot, I may no more abyde.
Myn housbond is to me the worste man,
That ever was siththe the world bigan;
But sith I am a wif, it sit nought me
To telle *no* wight of oure priveté,
Neyther a-bedde, ne in none other place;
God schilde I scholde telle it for his grace!
A wyf ne schal not say of hir housbonde
But al honour, as I can understonde.
Save unto yow thus moche telle I schal;
As help me God, he is not worth at al,
In no degré, the valieu of a flie.
But yit me greveth most his nigardye.
And wel ye wot, that wymmen naturelly
Desiren sixe thinges, as wel as I.
They wolde that here housbondes scholde be
Hardy, and wys, and riche, and *therto* fre,
And buxom to his wyf, and freisch on bedde.
But by the Lord that for us alle bledde,
For his honour my-selven to arraye,
A sonday next comyng yit most I paye
An hundred frank, or elles I am lorn.
Yit were me lever that I were unborn,
Than me were doon a sclaunder or vilenye.
And if myn housbond eek might it espie,
I ner but lost; and therfor I yow praye
Lene me this somme, or elles mot I deye.
Dan Johan, I seie, lene me this hundreth frankes;
Pardé I wil nouht faile the my thankes,

If that yow lust to do that I yowe praye.
For *at* a certein day I wol yow paye,
And do to yow what pleasaunce and servise
That I may do, right as you list devyse;
And but I do, God take on me vengeaunce,
As foul as hadde Geneloun of Fraunce!'
This gentil monk answerd in this manere;
'Now trewely, myn owne lady deere,
I have on yow so gret pité and reuthe,
That I yow swere, and plighte yow my treuthe,
Than whan your housbond is to Flaundres fare,
I schal deliver yow out of youre care,
For I wol bringe yow an hundred frankes.'
And with that word he caught hir by the schankes,
And hir embraced hard, and kist hir ofte.
'Goth now your way,' quod he, 'al stille and softe,
And let us dyne as sone as *ever* ye maye,
For by my chilindre it is prime of daye;
Goth now, and beth as trew as I schal be.'
'Now elles God forbede, sire!' quod sche.
And forth sche goth, as joly as a pye,
And bad the cookes that thai schold hem hye,
So that men myghte dyne, and that anoon.
Up to hir housbond this wif is *y*-goon,
And knokketh at his dore boldely.
'*Quy est la?*' quod he. 'Peter! it am I,'
Quod sche. 'How longe, sire, wol ye faste?
How longe tyme wol ye reken and caste
Youꝛ sommes, and your bokes, and your thinges?
The devel have part of alle such rekenynges.
Ye have i-nough pardy of Goddes sonde.
Com doun to day, and let your bagges stonde.
Ne be ye not aschamed, that daun Johan

Schal alday fastyng thus elenge goon?
What? let us hiere masse, and go we dyne.'
'Wif,' quod this man, 'litel canstow divine
The curious besynesse that we have;
For of us chapmen, *al*-so God me save,
And by that lord that cleped is seint Ive,
Scarsly amonges twelve, two schuln thrive
Continuelly, lastyng *un*to *our* age.
We may wel make cheer and good visage,
And dryve forth the world, as it may be,
And kepen our estat in priveté,
Til we be deed, or elles that we playe
A pilgrimage, or goon out of the waye;
And therfor have I gret necessité
Upon this queynte world to avyse me.
For evermor we moste stond in drede
Of hap and fortun in our chapmanhede.
To Flaundres wil I go to morw at day,
And come agayn as soone as *ever* I may;
For which, my deere wif, I the byseeke
As be to every wight buxom and meeke,
And for to kepe oure good be curious,
And honestly governe wel our hous.
Thou hast y-nough, in every maner wise,
That to a thrifty housbond may suffise.
The lakketh noon array, ne no vitaile;
Of silver in thy purs thou mayst not faile.'
And with that word his countour dore he schitte.
And doun he goth; no lenger wold he lette;
And hastily a masse was ther *i*-sayd,
And spedily the tables were i-layd,
And to the dyner faste thay hem spedde,
And rychely this chapman the monk fedde.

And after dyner daun Johan sobrely
This chapman took on-part, and prively
Sayd him thus: 'Cosyn, it stondeth so,
That, wel I se, to Brigges wol ye go;
God and seint Austyn spede you and gyde.
I pray yow, cosyn, wisly that ye ryde;
Governeth yow also of your diete
Al temperelly, and namely in this hete.
Betwix us tuo nedeth no straunge fare;
Far wel, cosyn, God schilde you fro care.
If eny thing ther be by day or night,
If it lay in my power and my might,
That ye wil me comaunde in eny wise,
It schal be doon, right as ye wol devyse.
O thing er that ye goon, if it mighte be,
I wolde praye yow for to lene me
An hundred frankes for a wyke or tweye,
For certeyn bestis that I moste beye,
To store with a place that is oures;
(God help me so, I wolde it were youres!)
I schal not faile seurly of my day,
Nought for a thousand frankes, a myle way.
But let this thing be secré, I yow praye;
For for the bestis this night most I paye.
And fare now wel, myn owne cosyn deere;
Graunt mercy of your cost and of your cheere.'
This noble merchaunt gentilly anoon
Answerd and sayde: 'O cosyn daun Johan,
Now sikerly this is a smal request;
My gold is youres, whanne that yow lest,
And noughi oonly my gold, but my chaffare;
Tak what yow liste, God schilde *that* ye spare!
But oon thing is, ye know it wel y-nough

Of chapmen, that her money is here plough.
We may creaunce whils we have a name,
But goldles for to be it is no game.
Pay it agayn, whan it lith in your ese;
After my might ful fayn wold I yow plese.'
This hundred frankes he fet forth anoon,
And prively he took hem to daun Johan;
No wight in al this world wist of this loone,
Savyng the marchaund, and daun Johan alloone.
Thay drynke, and speke, and rome a while and playe,
Til that dan Johan rydeth to his abbaye.
The morwe cam, and forth this marchaund rideth
To Flaundres-ward, his prentis wel him gydeth,
To that he cam to Brigges merily.
Now goth this marchaund faste and busily
About his neede, and bieth, and creaunceth;
He neither pleyeth atte dys, ne daunceth;
But as a marchaund, schortly for to telle,
He lad his lyf, and ther I let him duelle.
The sonday next the marchaund was agoon,
To Seint Denys i-come is daun Johan,
With croune and berd al freisch and newe i-schave.
In al the hous ther nas so litel a knave,
Ne no wight elles, that he nas ful fayn,
For that my lord dan Johan was come agayn.
And schortly to the poynte for to gon,
This faire wif acordith with dan Johan,
That for these hundred frank he schuld al night
Have hir in his armes bolt upright;
And this acord parformed was in dede.
In mirth al night a bisy lif thay lede
Til it was day, than dan Johan went his way,
And bad the meigné far wel, have good day.

For noon of hem, ne no wight in the toun,
Hath of dan Johan noon suspeccioun;
And forth he rideth hom to his abbay,
Or wher him list, no more of him I say.
This marchaund, whan that endid was the faire,
To Seynt Denys he gan *for* to repeire,
And with his wif he maketh fest and cheere,
And tellith hir that chaffar is so deere,
That needes most he make a chevisaunce,
For he was bounde in a reconisaunce,
To paye twenty thousand scheldes anoon.
For which this marchaund is to Paris goon,
To borwe of certeyn frendes that he hadde
A certein frankes, and some with him he ladde.
And whan that he was come into the toun
For gret chiertee and gret affeccioun,
Unto dan Johan he first goth him to playe;
Nought for to borwe of him no kyn monaye,
But for to wite and se of his welfare,
And for to telle him of his chaffare,
As frendes doon, whan thay ben met in fere.
Dan Johan him maketh fest and mery cheere;
And he him told agayn ful specially,
How he hadde bought right wel and graciously
(Thanked be God!) al *hole* his marchaundise;
Save that he most in alle manere wise
Maken a chevyssauns, as for his best;
And than he schulde be in joye and rest.
Dan Johan answerde, 'Certis I am fayn,
That ye in hele are comen hom agayn;
And if that I were riche, as have I blisse,
Of twenty thousand scheld schulde ye not mysse,
For ye so kyndely this other day

Lente me gold; and as I can and may
I thanke yow, by God and by seint Jame.
But natheles I took it to oure dame,
Youre wif *at home*, the same gold ayein
Upon your bench, sche wot it wel certeyn,
By certein toknes that I can hir telle.
Now by your leve, I may no lenger duelle;
Oure abbot wol out of this toun anoon,
And in his compaignye moot I goon.
Grete wel oure dame, myn owen nece swete,
And far wel, dere cosyn, til that we meete.'
This marchaund, which that was bothe war and wys,
Creaunced hath, and payed eek in Parys
To certeyn Lombardes redy in her hond
This somme of gold, and took of hem his bond,
And hom he goth, as mery as a popinjay.
For wel he knew he stood in such array,
That needes most he wynne in *that* viage
A thousand frankes, above al his costage.
His wyf *ful* redy mette him at the gate,
As sche was wont of old usage algate;
And al that night in mirthe thay ben sette,
For he was riche, and clerly out of dette.
Whan it was day, this marchaund gan embrace
His wyf al newe, and kist hir on hir face,
And up he goth, and make*th* it ful tough.
'No more,' quod sche, 'by God, ye have y-nough;'
And wantounly with him sche lay and playde,
Till atte laste thus this marchaund sayde:—
'By God,' quod he, 'I am a litel wroth
With yow, my wyf, although it be me loth;
And wite ye why? by God, as that I gesse,
Ye han i-maad a maner straungenesse

Bitwixe me and my cosyn dan Johan.
Ye schold have warned me, er I had*de* goon,
That he yow had an hundred frankes payd
By redy tokne; and huld him evil appayd
For that I to him spak of chevysaunce,
(Me semed*e* so as by his countenaunce);
But natheles, by God of heven king!
I thoughte nought to axe him no thing.
I pray the, wyf, do *thou* no more so.
Tel me alway, er that I fro the go,
If eny dettour have in myn absence
I-payed the, lest in thy necgligence
I may him axe a thing that he hath payed.'
This wyf was not affered ne affrayed,
But *boldely* sche sayde, and that anoon:
'Mary! I diffy that false monk, dan Johan!
I kepe not of his tokenes never a del;
He took me a certeyn gold, that wot I wel.
What? evel thedom on his monkes snowte!
For, God it wot! I wende withoute doute,
That he had yeve it me, bycause of yow,
To do therwith myn honour and my prow,
For cosynage, and eek for *bele cheer*
That he hath had ful ofte tyme heer.
But synnes that I stonde in this disjoynt,
I wol answer*e* yow schortly to the poynt.
Ye han mo slakke dettours than am I;
For I wol paye yow wel and redily
Fro day to day, and if so be I faile,
I am your wif, score it upon my taile,
And I schal paye it as soone as I may.
For by my trouthe, I have on myn array,
And nought on wast, bistowed it every del.

And for I have bistowed it so wel
To youre honour, for Goddes sake I saye,
As beth nought wroth, but let us laugh and playe;
Ye schul my joly body have to wedde;
By God, I wol not paye yow but on bedde;
Foryeve it me, myn owne spouse deere;
Turne hider-ward and make better cheere.'
This marchaund saugh noon other remedy;
And for to chide, it nas but foly,
Sith that the thing may not amendid be.
'*Now*, wif,' he sayde, 'and I foryive it the;
But by thi lif, ne be no more so large;
Keep better my good, this yive I the in charge.'
Thus endeth now my tale, and God us sende
Talyng y-nough, unto our lyves ende!'

THE PRIORESSES PROLOGE.

'WEL sayd, by corpus boones!' quod oure Host,
'Now longe mot thou sayle by the cost,
Sir gentil maister, gentil mariner!
God yive the monk a thousand last quade yer,
Haha! felaws, be war for such a jape.
The monk put in the mannes hood an ape,
And in his wyves eek, by seint Austyn.
Draweth no monkes more unto your in.
But now pas over, and let us loke aboute,
Who schal *now* telle first of al this route
Another tale;' and with that word he sayde,
As curteisly as it had*de* ben a mayde,
'My lady Prioresse, by your leve,
So that I wist I scholde yow not greve,
I wolde deme, that ye telle scholde
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde.
Now wol ye vouche sauf, my lady deere?'
'Gladly,' quod sche, and sayd in this manere.

THE PRIORESSES TALE.

LORD, oure Lord, thy name how merveylous
Is in this large world i-sprad! (quod sche)
For nought oonly thy laude precious
Parformed is by men of heih degré,
But by mouthes of children thy bounté
Parformed is; on oure brest soukynge
Som tyme schewe thay thin heriynge.
Wherfore in laude, as I best can or may,
Of the and of thy white lily flour,
Which that the bar, and is a mayde alway,
To telle a story I wil do my labour;
Nought that I may encresce youre honour,
For sche hirsilf is honour and roote
Of bounté, next hir Sone, and soules boote.
O moodir mayde, o mayde mooder fre!
O bussh unbrent, brennyng in Moises sight,
That ravysshedest doun fro the deité,
Thurgh thin humblesse, the gost that in the alighte;
Of whos vertu, he in thin herte pighte,
Conceyved was the Fadres sapience;
Help me to telle it in thy reverence.
Lady, thi bounté, and thy magnificence,
Thy vertu and thi gret humilité,
Ther may no tonge expres in no science;
For som tyme, lady, er men praye to the,
Thow gost biforn of thy benignité,

And getist us the light, thurgh thy prayere
To gyden us the way to thy Sone so deere.
My connyng is to weyk, o blisful queene,
For to declare thy grete worthinesse,
That I may not this in my wyt susteene;
But as a child of twelf month old or lesse,
That can unnethes eny word expresse,
Right so fare I, and therfor I you praye,
Gydeth my song, that I schal of you saye.
Ther was in Acy, in a greet citee,
Amonges Cristen folk a Jewerye,
Susteyned by a lord of that contré,
For foul usure, and lucre of felonye,
Hateful to Crist, and to his compaignye;
And thurgh the strete men mighte ride and wende,
For it was fre, and open at everich ende.
A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
Doun at the forther end, in which ther were
Children an heep y-comen of Cristen blood,
That lered in that scole, yer by yere,
Such maner doctrine as men usede there;
This is to saye, to synge and to rede,
As smale childer doon in her childhede.
Among these children was a widow sone,
A litel clergeoun, that seve yer was of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone;
And eek also, wherso he saugh thymage
Of Cristes moder, had he in usage,
As him was taught, to knele adoun, and saye
His *Ave Maria*, as he goth by the waye.
Thus hath this widow her litel child i-taught
Oure blisful lady, Cristes moder deere,
To worschip ay, and he foryat it nought;

For cely child wil alway soone leere.
But ay whan I remembre of this matiere,
Seint Nicholas stont ever in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist dede reverence.
This litel child, his litel book lernynge,
As he sat in the scole in his primere,
He *O alma redemptoris* herde synge,
As children lerned her antiphonere;
And as he durst, he drough him ner and neere,
And herkned ever the wordes and the note,
Til he the firste vers couthe al by rote.
Nought wist he what his Latyn was to saye,
For he so yong and tender was of age;
But on a day his felaw gan he praye
To expoune him the song in his langage,
Or telle him what this song was in usage;
This prayd he him to construe and declare,
Ful often tyme upon his knees bare.
His felaw, which that elder was than he,
Answerd him thus: 'This song, I have herd seye,
Was maked of our blisful lady fre,
Hire to saluen, and eek hire to preye
To ben our help and socour whan we deye.
I can no more expoune in this matere;
I lerne song, I can no more gramer.'
'And is this song i-maad in reverence
Of Cristes moder?' sayde this innocent;
'Now certes I wol do my diligence
To conne it al, er Cristemasse be went;
Though that I for my primer schal be schent,
And schal be betyn thries in an hour,
I wol it conne, our lady to honoure.'
His felaw taught him hom-ward prively

From day *to* day, til he couthe it by rote,
And than he song it wel and boldely;
Twyes on the day it passede thurgh his throte,
From word to word accordyng to the note,
To scole-ward and hom-ward whan he wente;
On Cristes moder was set al his entente.
As I have sayd, thurghout the Jewrye
This litel child as he cam to and fro,
Ful merily than wold he synge and crie,
O alma redemptoris, evermo;
The swetnes hath his herte persed so
Of Cristes moder, that to hir to praye
He can not stynt of syngyng by the waye.
Oure firste foo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jewes hert his waspis nest,
Upswal and sayde: 'O Ebreik peple, allas!
Is this a thing to yow that is honest,
That such a boy schal walken as him lest
In youre despyt, and synge of such sentence,
Which is ayens your lawes reverence?'
Fro thennesforth the Jewes han conspired
This innocent out of this world to enchace;
An homicide therto, ye, han thay hired.
That in an aley had a privé place;
And as the childe gan forthby *for* to pace,
This false Jewe him hent, and huld ful faste,
And kut his throte, and *in a pute him caste.*
I say in a wardrobe thay him threwe,
Wher as the Jewes purgen her entraile.
O cursed folk! O Herodes al newe!
What may your evyl entente you availe?
Morther wol out, certeyn it wil nought faile,
And namly ther thonour of God schulde sprede;

The blood out crieth on your cursed dede.
O martir soudit to virginité,
Now maystow synge, folowyng ever in oon
The white lomb celestial, quod sche,
Of which the grete evaungelist seint Johan
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that thay goon
Bifore the lamb, and synge a song al newe,
That never fleischly wommen thay *ne* knewe.
This pore widowe wayteth al this night,
After this litel child, but he cometh nought;
For which as soone as it was dayes light,
With face pale, in drede and busy thoughte,
Sche hath at schole and elles-wher him soughte;
Til fynally sche gan of hem aspye,
That he was last seyn in the Jewerie.
With moodres pité in hir brest enclosed,
Sche goth, as sche were half out of hir mynde,
To every place, wher sche hath supposed
By liklihede hir child for to fynde;
And ever on Cristes mooder meke and kynde
Sche cried, and atte laste thus sche wroughte,
Among the cursed Jewes sche him soughte.
Sche freyned, and sche prayede pitously
To every Jew that dwelled in that place,
To telle hir, if hir child wente ther by;
Thay sayden nay; but Jhesu of his grace
Yaf in hir thought, withinne a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone sche cryde,
Wher as he was cast in a put bysyde.
O grete God, that parformedist thin laude
By mouth of innocentz, lo, here thy might!
This gemme of chastité, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright!

Ther he with throte i-*corve* lay upright,
He *Alma redemptoris* gan to synge
So lowde, that al the place bigan to rynge.
The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,
In comen, for to wonder upon this thing;
And hastily for the provost thay sente.
He cam anoon, withoute tarying,
And heriede Crist, that is of heven Kyng,
And eek his moder, honour of mankynde,
And after that the Jewes let he bynde.
This child with pitous lamentacioun
Up taken was, syngyng his song alway;
And with honour of gret processioun,
Thay caried him unto the next abbay.
His modir swownyng by the beere lay;
Unnethe mighte the poeple that was there
This newe Rachel bringe fro the beere.
With torment and with schamful deth echon
This provost doth these Jewes for to sterve,
That of this moerder wist, and that anoon;
He wolde no such cursednesse observe;
Evel schal have, that evyl wol deserve.
Therfore with wilde hors he dede hem drawe,
And after that he heng hem by the lawe.
Upon his beere ay lith this innocent
Biforn the chief auter whiles the masse laste;
And after that, thabbot with his covent
Hath sped him for to burie him ful faste;
And whan thay halywater on him caste,
Yet spak this child. whan spreynde was the water,
And song *O alma redemptoris mater.*
This abbot, which that was an holy man,
As monkes ben, or elles oughte be,

This yonge child to conjure he bigan,
And sayd: 'O deere child, I halse the,
In vertu of the holy Trinité,
Tel me what is thy cause for to synge,
Sith that thy throte is kit at my somynge.'
'My throte is kit unto my nekke-boon,'
Sayde this child, 'and as by way of kynde
I schulde han ben deed long tyme agoon;
But Jhesu Crist, as ye in bookes fynde,
Wol that his glorie laste and be in mynde;
And for the worschip of his moder deere,
Yet may I synge *O alma* lowde and cleere.
'This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
I loved alway, as after my connynge;
And whan that I my lyf schulde leete,
To me sche cam, and bad me for to synge
This antym verraily in my deyinge,
As ye have herd; and, whan that I had*de* songe,
Me thought*e* sche layde a grayn under my tonge.
'Wherfor I synge, and synge moot certeyne
In honour of that blisful mayden fre,
Til fro my tonge taken is the greyne.
And after that thus saide sche to me:
'My litil child, now wil I feeche the,
Whan than the grayn is fro thi tonge i-take;
Be nought agast, I wol the not forsake.'
This holy monk, this abbot him mene I,
His tonge out caught, and took awey the greyn;
And he yaf up the gost ful softely.
And whan the abbot hath this wonder seyn,
His salte teres striken doun as reyn;
And gruf he fel adoun unto the grounde,
And stille he lay, as he had*de* ben y-bounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavymente
Wepyng and herying Cristes moder deere.
And after that thay rise, and forth thay wente,
And took away this martir fro his beere,
And in a tombe of marble stoones cleere
Enclosede thay this litil body sweete;
Ther he is now, God lene us for to meete!

O yonge Hughe of Lyncoln; slayn also
With cursed Jewes (as it is notable,
For it nys but a litel while ago),
Pray eek for us, we synful folk unstable,
That of his mercy God so merciable
On us his grete mercy multiplie,
For reverence of his modir Marie. *Amen.*

PROLOGE TO SIRE THOPAS.

WHAN sayd was this miracle, every man
As sober was, that wonder was to se,
Til that oure Host to jape bigan,
And than at erst he loked upon me,
And sayde thus: 'What man art thou?' quod he.
'Thou lokest as thou woldest fynde an hare,
For ever upon the ground I se the stare.

'Approche ner, and loke merily.
Now ware you, sires, and let this man have space.
He in the wast is schape as wel as I;
This were a popet in an arm to embrace
For any womman, smal and fair of face.
He semeth elvisch by his countenaunce,
For unto no wight doth he daliaunce.

'Say now som what, sins other folk han said;
Telle us a tale and that of mirthe anoon.'
'Host,' quod I, 'ne beth nought evel apayd,
For other tale certes can I noon,
But of a rym I lernede yore agoon
Ye, that is good,' quod he,' now schul we heere
Som deyntē thing, me thinketh by his cheere.'

THE TALE OF SIR THOPAS.

LESTENETH, lordyngs, in good entent,
And I wol telle verrayment
Of myrthe and *of* solas,
Al of a knyght was fair and gent
In batail and in tornament,
His name was Sir Thopas.
I-bore he was in fer contré,
In Flaundres, al byyonde the se,
At Poperyng in the place;
His fader was a man ful fre,
And lord he was of that contré,
As it was Goddes grace.
Sir Thopas wax a doughty swayn;
Whyt was his face as payndemayn,
His lippes reed as rose;
His rode is lik scarlet en grayn,
And I yow telle, in good certayn
He had a semly nose.
His heer, his berd, was lik safroun,
That to his girdil raught adoun;
His schoon of cordewane;
Of Brigges were his hosen broun;
His robe was of sicladoun,
That coste many a jane.
He couthe hunt at wilde deer,
And ride on haukyng for ryver
With gray goshauk on honde;

Therto he was a good archeer,
Of wrastelyng was noon his peer,
Ther eny ram schal stonde.
Ful many mayde bright in bour
Thay mourne for him, *par amour*,
Whan hem were bet to slepe:
But he was chast and no lecchour,
And sweet as is the brembre flour
That bereth the reede heepe.
And so it fel upon a day,
For soth as I yow telle may,
Sir Thopas wold out ryde;
He worth upon his steede gray,
And in his hond a launcegay,
A long sword by his syde.
He priketh thurgh a fair forest,
Therin is many a wilde best,
Ye, bothe buk and hare;
And as he prikede north and est,
I tel it yow, hym had almest
Bityd a sory care.
Ther springen herbes greet and smale,
The licorys and the cetewale,
And many a clow gilofre,
And notemuge to put in ale,
Whethir it be moist or stale,
Or for to lay in cofre.
The briddes synge, it is no nay,
The sperhauk and the popinjay,
That joye it was to heere;
The throstilcock maad eek his lay,
The woode dowve upon the spray
Tho song ful lowde and cleere.

Sir Thopas fel in love-longinge,
Whan that he herde the briddes synge,
And priked as he were wood;
His faire steede in his prikynge
So swette, that men might him wrynge,
His sydes were al blood.
Sir Thopas eek so wery was
For priking on the softe gras,
So feers was his corrage,
That doun he layd him in the place
To make his steede som solace,
And yaf him good forage.
'O, seinte Mary, *benedicite*,
What eylith this love at me
To bynde me so sore?
Me dremed al this night, pardé,
An elf queen schal my lemman be,
And slepe under my gore.
An elf queen wol I have, i-wis,
For in this world no womman is
Worthy to be my make
In toune;
Alle othir wommen I forsake,
And to an elf queen I me take
By dale and eek by doune.'
Into his sadil he clomb anoon,
And priked over stile and stoon
An elf queen for to spye;
Til he so longe hath ryden and goon,
That he fond in a privé woon
The contré of fairye,
So wylde;
For in that contré was ther noon,

That to hym durste ride or goon,
Neither wif ne childe.
Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,
His name was sir Olifaunt,
A perilous man of dede;
He swar, 'Child, by Termagaunt,
But-if thou prike out of myn haunt,
Anoon I slee *thy stede*,
With mace.
Heer is the queen of fayerie,
With harp, and lute, and symphonye,
Dwellyng in this place.'
The child sayd: 'Also mote I the,
To morwe wil I meete with the,
Whan I have myn armure.
And yit I hope, par ma fay,
That thou schalt with this launcegay
Abyen it ful soure;
Thy mawe
Schal I persyn, if that I may,
Er it be fully prime of day,
For heer schalt thou be slawe.'
Sir Thopas drough on-bak ful faste;
This geaunt at him stoones caste
Out of a fell staf slynge;
But faire eschapeth child Thopas,
And al it was thurgh Goddis gras,
And thurgh his *faire* berynge.
Yet lesteneth, lordynges, to my tale,
Merier than the nightyngale.
For nowe I wol yow roune.
How sir Thopas with sides smale,
Prikynge over hul and dale,

Is come ageyn to toune.
His mery men comaunded he,
To make him bothe game and gle,
For needes most he fighte
With a geaunt with heedes thre,
For paramours and jolité
Of oon that schon ful brighte,
'Do come,' he sayde, 'my mynstrales
And gestours for to telle tales
Anoon in myn armynge,
Of romaunces that ben reales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
And eek of love-*longeinge*.'
Thay fet him first the swete wyn,
And made him eek in a maselyn
A real spicerye,
Of gyngebred that was so fyn,
And licorys, and eek comyn,
With sugre that is trye.
He dede next his white leere
Of cloth of lake whyt and cleere
A brech and eek a schert;
And next his schert an aketoun,
And over that an haberjoun,
For persyng of his hert;
And over that a fyn hauberk,
Was al i-wrought of Jewes werk,
Ful strong it was of plate;
And over that his cote-armour,
As whyt as is a lily flour,
In which he wolde debate.
His scheld was al of gold so red,
And therinne was a bores heed,

A charbocle by his syde;
And ther he swor on ale and bred
How that the geaunt schal be deed,
Bytyde what betyde.
His jambeux were of quirboily,
His swerdes schethe of yvory,
His helm of latoun bright.
His sadel was of rowel boon,
His bridel as the sonne schon,
Or as the moone light;
His spere was of *fine* cipres,
That bodeth werre, and no thing pees,
The heed ful scharp i-grounde.
His steede was al dappul gray,
Hit goth an ambel in the way
Ful softely and rounde
In londe.
Lo, lordes, heer is a fyt;
If ye wil eny more of it,
To telle it wol I fonde.

FIT II.

NOW hold your mouth for charité,
Bothe knight and lady fre,
And herkneth to my spelle;
Of batail and of chivalry,
Of ladys love drewery,
Anoon I wol yow telle.
Men speken of romauns of pris,

Of Horn child and of Ypotis,
Of Bevys and sir Gy,
Of sir Libeaux, and Pleyndamour;
But sir Thopas bereth the flour
Of real chivalry.
His goode steede he bistrood,
And forth upon his way he glood,
As sparkeles out of the bronde;
Upon his crest he bar a tour,
And therin stiked a lily flour:—
God schilde his corps fro schonde!
And for he was a knyght auntrous,
He nolde slepen in noon hous,
But liggen in his hood.
His brighte helm was his wonger,
And by him baytith his destrer
Of herbes fyne and goode.
Him self drank water of the welle,
As dede the knight *sir Percivelle*
So worthy under wede,
Tille it was on a daye,———

PROLOGE TO MELIBEUS.

NO mor of this, for Goddes dignité!'
Quod our Hoste, 'for thou makest me
So wery of thy verrey lewednesse,
That, al-so wisly God my soule blesse,
Myn eeres aken for thy drasty speche.
Now such a rym the devel I byteche!
This may wel be rym dogerel,' quoth he.
'Why so?' quod I, 'why wilt thou lette me
More of my tale than another man,
Syn that it is the beste rym I can?'
'By God!' quod he, 'for pleinly at o word,
Thy drasty rymyng is not worth a tord;
Thou dost nought elles but despendist tyme.
Sir, at o word, thou schalt no lenger ryme.
Let se wher thou canst tellen ought in gest,
Or telle in prose som what atte lest,
In which ther be som merthe or doctrine.'
'Gladly,' quod I, 'by Goddes swete pyne,
I wol yow telle a litel thing in prose,
That oughte like yow, as I suppose,
Or elles certes ye be to daungerous.
It is a moral tale vertuous,
Al be it told som tyme in sondry wise
Of sondry folk, as I schal yow devyse.
As thus, ye woot that every evaungelist,
That telleth us the peyne of Jhesu Crist,
Ne saith *nat* alle thing as his felawes doth;

But natheles here sentence is al soth,
And alle accorden as in here sentence,
Al be ther in her tellyng difference.
For some of hem sayn more, and some lesse,
Whan thay his pitous passioun expresse;—
I mene of Mark, Mathew, Luk and Johan;—
But douteles her sentence is al oon.
Therfor, lordynges alle, I yow biseche,
If yow think that I varye as in my speche,
As thus, though that I telle som what more
Of proverbes, than *ye* have herd bifore
Comprehended in this litel tretys here,
To enforcen with theffect of my matiere,
And though I not the same wordes say
As ye have herd, yit to yow alle I pray,
Blameth me nought; for, in my sentence,
Schul ye no wher fynde difference
Fro the sentence of this tretys lite,
After the which this litil tale I write.
And therfor herkeneth what I schal saye,
And let me tellen al my tale, I praye.'

THE TALE OF MELIBEUS.

A YONG man called Melibeus, mighty and riche, bygat upon his wif, that called was Prudens, a doughter which that called was Sophie. Upon a day byfel, that for his desport he is went into the feldes him to play. His wif and his doughter eek

hath he laft in-with his hous, of which the dores were fast i-schitte. Thre of his olde foos han it espyed, and setten laddres to the walles of his hous, and by the wyndowes ben entred, and beetyn his wyf, and woundid his doughter with fyve mortal woundes, in fyve sondry places, that is to sayn, in here feet, in here hondes, in here eeres, in here nose, and in here mouth; and lafte her for deed, and went away.

Whan Melibeus retourned was into his hous, and seigh al this meschief, he, lik a man mad, rendyng his clothes, gan wepe and crie. Prudens his wyf, as ferforth as sche dorste, bisought him of his wepyng to stynte. But not forthi he gan to crie ever lenger the more.

This noble wyf Prudence remembred hire upon the sentens of Ovide, in his book that cleped is the Remedy of Love, wher as he seith: He is a fool that destourbeth the moder to wepe in the deth of hir childe, til sche have i-wept hir fille, as for a certeyn tyme; and than schal man doon his diligence as with amyable wordes hire to recomforte and praye hire of hire wepyng to stinte. For which resoun this noble wif Prudens suffred hir housbonde for to wepe and crie, as for a certeyn space; and whan sche seigh hir tyme, sche sayd him in this wise: 'Allas! my lord,' quod sche, 'why make ye youre self for to be lik a fool? Forsothe it apperteyneth not to a wys man, to make such sorwe. Your doughter, with the grace of God, schal warischt be and eschape. And al were it so that sche right now were deed, ye ne oughte nought as for hir deth youre silf destroye.

Senec saith, The wise man schal not take to gret discomfort for the deth of his children, but certes he schulde suffren it in pacience, as wel as he abydeth the deth of his owne persone.'

This Melibeus answerde anoon and sayde: 'What man,' quod he, 'schuld of his wepynge stynte, that hath *so gret* a cause for to wepe? Jhesu Crist, oure Lord, him self wepte for the deth of Lazarus his frend.' Prudens answerde: 'Certes, wel I wot, attemperel wepyng is no thing defended to him that sorwful is, amonges folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted him to wepe. The apostel Poule unto the Romayns writeth, A man schal rejoyce with hem that maken joye, and wepe with such folk as wepen. But though attemperel wepyng be graunted, outrageous wepynge certes is defended. Mesure of wepynge *schulde* be conserved, after the lore of Crist that techeth us Senec; Whan that thi frend is deed, quod he, let nought thin yen to moyste ben of teres, ne to moche drye; although the teeres come *to* thine eyghen, let hem not falle. And whan thou hast for-gon thy frend, do diligence to gete another frende; and this is more wisedom than to wepe for thy frend, which that thou hast lorn, for therin is no boote. And therfore if ye governe yow by sapience, put away sorwe out of youre hert. Remembreth yow that Jhesus Sirac saith, A man that is joyous and glad in herte, it him conserveth florischinge in his age; but sothly sorweful herte maketh his boones drye. He saith eek thus, that sorwe in herte sleth ful many a man. Salamon saith, that right as motthes in schepes flees annoyeth the clothes, and the smale

wormes *on* the tre *unto the fruyte*, right so annoyeth sorwe to the herte. Wherfore us oughte as wel in the deth of oure children, as in the losse of oure goodes temporales, have pacience. Remembreth yow upon the pacient Jop, whan he hadde lost his children and his temporal substance, and in his body endured and receyved ful many a grevous tribulacioun, yit sayde he thus: Oure Lord it sent unto me, oure Lord it hath raft fro me; right so as oure Lord wil, right so be it doon; i-blessed be the name of oure Lord!' To these forsayde thinges answerith Melibeus unto his wif Prudens: 'Alle thine wordes ben soth,' quod he, 'and therto profytable, but sothly myn herte is so troubled with this sorwe, that I noot what to doone.' 'Let calle,' quod Prudence, 'thy trewe frendes alle, and thy linage, whiche that ben trewe and wise; telleth hem youre grevaunce, and herken what thay say in counseilynge, and yow governe after here sentence. Salomon saith, Werke al thi thing by counseil, and the thar never rewe.'

Than, by the counseil of his wyf Prudens, this Melibeus let calle a gret congregacioun of peple, as surgiens, phisiciens, olde, and yonge, and some of his olde enemyes recounsiled (as by her semblaunt) to his love and to his grace; and therwithal ther come some of his neighebours, that deden him reverence more for drede than for love, as happeth ofte. Ther comen also ful many subtil flaterers, and wise advoketes lerned in the lawe. And whan these folk togidere assemblid were, this Melibeus in sorwful wyse schewed hem his caas, and by the maner of his speche, it semede that in

herte he bar a cruel ire, redy to do vengeance upon his foos, and sodeynly desirede that the werre schulde bygynne; but natheles yit axed he her counseil in this matier. A sirurgien, by licens and assent of suche as were wyse, up ros, and to Melibeus sayde, as ye may hiere.

'Sire,' quod he, 'as to us sirurgiens appertieneth, that we do to every wight the beste that we can, wher as we ben withholde, and to oure pacient that we do no damage; wherfore it happeth many tyme and ofte, that whan tweye han everich wounded other, oo same surgien heleth hem bothe; where unto oure art it is not perteyned to norische werre, ne parties to supporte. But certes, as to warisching of youre doughter, al be it so that sche perilously be woundid, we schullen do so tentyf besynes fro day to night, that with the grace of God sche schal be hool and sound, als soone as it is possible.' Almost right in the same wise the phisiciens answerden, save that thay sayden a fewe wordes more; that ryght as maladies ben cured by her contraries, right so schal men warissche werre by vengeaunce. His neygheboures ful of envy, his feyned freendes that semede recounsiled, *and* his flatereres, maden semblaunt of wepyng, and appaired and aggregged moche of this matiere, in preisyng gretly Melibe of might, of power, of riches, and of frendes, despisinge the power of his adversaries; and sayden outerly, that he anoon schulde wreke him on his adversaries be bygynnynge of werre.

Up roos thanne an advocate that was wys, by leve and by counseil of othere that were wise, and

sayde: 'Lordynges, the needes for whiche we ben assemblit in this place is ful hevy thing, and an heigh matier, bycause of the wrong and of the wikkednes that hath ben doon, and eek *by resoun* of the grete damages that in tyme comyng ben possible to falle for the same, and eek bycause of the grete richesse and power of the partes bothe; for the whiche resouns, it were a ful gret peril to erren in these materes. Wherfore, Melibeus, this is oure sentence; we counseile yow, aboven alle thinges, that right anoon thou do diligence in kepyng of thy body in such a wyse that thou ne wante noon espye ne wacche thy body for to save. And after that, we counseile that in thin hous thou sette suffisaunt garnisoun, so that thay may as wel thy body as thin hous defende. But certes for to moeve werre, ne sodeynly for to do vengeance, we may not deme in so litel tyme that it were profitable. Wherfore we axen leysir and a space *to have deliberacion* in this caas to demen; for the comune proverbe saith this; he that soone demeth, soone schal repente. And eek men sayn, that thilke juge is wys, that soone understondeth a matier, and juggeth by leysir. For al be it so, that alle taryinge is anoyful, algates it is no reproef in yevynge of juggement, ne of vengaunce takyng, whan it is suffisaunt and resonable. And that schewed oure Lord Jhesu Crist by ensample, for whan that the womman that was i-take in advoutrie, was brought in his presence to knowen what schulde be doon of hir persone, al be it that he wist him self what that he wolde answere, yit wolde he not answere sodenyly, but he wolde have

deliberacioun, and in the ground hem wrot twyes. And by these causes we axe deliberacioun; and we schul thanne by the grace of God counseile the thing that schal be profytable.' Upstarten thenne the yonge folkes anoon at oones, and the moste parte of that companye han skorned these olde wise men, and bygonne to make noyse and sayden: 'Right so as whil that iren is hoot men scholden smyte, right so schulde men wreke here wronges, whil that they ben freische and newe;' and with lowde vois thay cryde, 'Werre, werre.'

Uproos tho oon of these olde wise, and with his hond made countenaunce that men schulde holde hem stille, and yiven him audience. 'Lordyngs,' quod he, 'ther is ful many a man that crieth 'werre, werre,' *that* wot ful litel what werre amounteth. Werre at his bygynnyng hath so greet an entre and so large, that every wight may entre whan him liketh, and lightly fynde werre; but certes what ende schal falle therof, it is not lightly to knowe. For sothly whan that werre is oones bygonne, ther is ful many a child unbore of his mooder that schal sterve yong, bycause of thilke werre, or elles lyve in sorwe and deye in wrecchidnes; and therfore, er that eny werre be bygonne, men moste have gret counseil and gret deliberacioun.' And whan this olde man wende to enforce his tale by resouns, wel neigh alle at oones bygonne thay to rise, for to breke his tale, and beden him ful ofte his wordes to abrigge. For sothly he that precheth to hem that liste not to heere his wordes, his sermoun hem anoyeth. For Jhesus Sirac saith, that musik in wepyng is a

noyous thing. This is to say, as moche avayleth to speke to-fore folk to whiche his speche annoyeth, as it is to synge byfore hem whiche that wepith. And whan this wise man saugh him wanted audience, al schamefast he sette him doun agayn. For Salamon saith, Ther as thou may have noon audience, enforce the not to speke. 'I se wel,' quod this wise man, 'that the comune proverbe is soth, that good counseil wantith, whan it is most neede.' Yit hadde this Melibeus in his counseil many folk, that prively in his eere counseled him the contrarie in general audience.

Whan Melibeus hadde herd that the grettest party of his counseil were accorded that he schulde make werre, anoon he consentede to here counseilyng, and fully affermed here sentence. Thanne dame Prudence, whan that sche saugh that hir housbonde schop him to wreke him of his enemyes, and to gynne werre, sche in ful humble wise, whan sche saugh hire tyme, sayde him these wordes; 'My lord,' quod sche, 'I yow biseche as hertily as I dar and kan, ne haste yow nought to faste, and for alle guerdouns as yeve me audience. For Peres Alfons saith, Who that doth to the outher good or harm, haste the nought to quyten him, for in this wise thy freend wil abyde, and thin enemy schal the lenger lyve in drede. The proverbe saith, He hastith wel that wisly can abyde; and in wikked haste is no profyt.' This Melibeus answerde unto his wyf Prudens; 'I purpose not,' quod he, 'to werke by thy counseil, for many causes and resouns; for certes every wight wolde holde me thanne a fool; this is to sayn, if

I for thy counseil wolde chaunge thinges that affermed ben by so many wise. *Secoundly*, I say that alle wommen be wikked, and noon good of hem alle. For of a thousand men, saith Salomon, I fond oon good man; but certes of alle wommen good womman fond I never noon. And also certes, if I governede me by thy counseil, it schulde seme that I hadde yiven to the over me the maistry; and God forbeede er it so were. For Jhesus Syrac saith, that if a wif have maistrie, sche is contrarious to hir housbond. And Salomon saith, Never in thy lif to thy wyf, ne to thy child, ne to thy freend, ne yeve no power over thi self; for better it were that thy children axen of thy persone thinges that been needful to hem, than thou se thi self in the hondes of thy children. And also, if I wolde werke by thy counselynge, certes it moste som tyme be secré, til it were tyme that it moste be knowe; and this ne may not be.'

Whan dame Prudence, ful debonerly and with gret pacience, hadde herd al that hir housbonde likede for to seye, thanne axede sche of him licence for to speke, and sayde in this wise; 'My lord,' quod sche, 'as to youre firste resoun, certes it may lightly be answered; for I say it is no foly to chaunge counsel whan the thing is chaungid, or elles whan the thing semeth otherwise than it was biforn. And moreover I say, though that ye han sworn and i-hight to parforme youre emprise, and natheles ye wayve to parforme thilke same emprise by juste cause, men schulde not saye therfore that ye were a lyere, ne for-sworn; for the book seith, that the wise man maketh no lesyng, whan

he torneth his corrage to the better. And al be it so that youre emprise be establid and ordeyned by gret multitude of people, yet thar ye not accomplise thilke same ordinaunce but you like; for the trouthe of *a* thing, and the profyt, ben rather founde in fewe folk that ben wise and ful of resoun, than by gret multitude of folk, ther every man crieth and clatereth what that him liketh; sothely such multitude is not honest. And to the secounde resoun, wheras ye sayn, that alle wommen ben wikke; save youre grace, certis ye despise alle wommen in this wise, and *he* that alle despysith, saith the book, *alle despleseth*. And Senec saith, Who-so wil have sapience, schal no man desprayse, but he schal gladly teche the science that he can, withoute presumpcioun or pryde; and suche thinges as he nought can, he schal not ben aschamed to lerne hem, and enquere of lasse folk than himself. And, sire, that ther hath be ful many a good womman *maie lihtly be proved. Certes, sire, oure Lorde Jhesu Crist nolde nevere have descended to be borne of womman*, if alle wommen hadde ben wikke. *And* after that, for the grete bounté that is in wommen, oure Lord Jhesu Crist, whan he was risen fro deth to lyve, apperede rather to a womman than to his apostles. And though that Salamon say, he fond never good womman, it folwith nought therfore, that alle wommen ben wikke; for though that he fonde noone goode wommen, certes many another man hath founden many a womman ful goode and trewe. Or elles paraventure thentent of Salamon was this, as in sovereyn bounté he fond no

womman; this is to saye, that ther is no wight that hath soverein bounté, save God aloone, as he him-self recordeth in his Evaungelie. For ther nys no creature so good, that him *ne* wantith som-what of the perfeccioun of God that is his makere. Youre thridde resoun is this; ye seyn that if ye governede yow by counsel of me, it schulde seme that ye hadde yeve me the maystry and the lordschipe over youre persone. Sire, save youre grace, it is not so; for if so were that no man schulde be counseiled but by hem that hadde maystrie and lordschipe of his persone, men wolde nought be counseiled so ofte; for sothly thilke man that axeth counseil of a purpos, yet hath he fre chois whether he wil werke by that purpos or noon. And *as* to youre ferthe resoun, ther ye sayn that the janglerie of wommen can hyde thinges that they wot not of; as who saith, that a womman can nought hyde that *tha*t sche woot; sire, these wordes ben understonde of wommen that ben jangelers and wikke; of whiche wommen men sayn that thre thinges dryven a man out of his oughne hous; that is to saye, smoke, droppyng of reyn, and wikked wyfes. Of suche wommen saith Salomon, that it were better to a man to dwelle in desert, than with a womman that is riotous. And, sire, by youre leve, that am not I; for ye han ful ofte assayed my grete silence and my grete pacience, and eek how wel that I can hyde and hele thinges that ben secrely to hyde. And sothly, as to youre fyfte resoun, wher as ye sayn, that in wikkede counseil wommen venquisscheth men, God wot thilke resoun stont here

in no stede; for understondith now, ye axen counseil to do wickidnes; and if ye wile wirke wickidnes, and youre wyf restreyne thilke wicked purpos, and overcome you by resoun and by good counseil, certes youre wyf oweth rather be preised than y-blamed. Thus schulde ye understonde the philosopher that seith, In wicked counseil wommen venquyschen her housbondes. And ther as ye blame alle wymmen and here resouns, I schal schewe by many resouns and ensamples that many a womman hath ben ful good, and yit been, and here counseiles ful holsome and profitable. Eke some men had sayd, that the counseilyng of wommen is outher to dere, or to litel of pris. But al be it so that ful many a womman is badde, and hir counseil vile and not worth, yet han men founde many a ful good womman, and ful discret and wys in counseilyng. Lo, Jacob, by counseil of his moder Rebecca, wan the blessyng of his fader Ysaak, and the lordschipe of alle his bretheren. Judith, by hire goode counseil, delyverede the citee of Bethulie, in which sche dwellide, out of the *honde* of Olophernus, that hadde it byseged, and wolde it al destroye. Abigayl deliverede Nabal hir housbond fro David the king, that wolde have i-slayn him, and appesede the ire of the kyng by hir witte, and by hir good counseilynge. Hester by good counseil enhaunsede gretly the poeple of God, in the regne of Assuerus the kyng. And the same bounté in good counseilyng of many a good womman maye men rede and telle. And moreover, whan oure Lord hadde creat Adam oure forme fader, he sayde in this wise: Hit is not goode to

be a man aloone; make we to him an help semblable to him-self. Here may ye se that if that a womman were not good, and hir counseil good and profytable, oure Lord God of heven wolde neither have wrought hem, ne called hem help of man, but rather confusioun *of* man. And ther sayde oones a clerk in tuo versus, What is better than gold? Jasper. And what is better than jasper? Wisedom. And what is better than wisedom? Womman. And what is better than *a* good womman? No thing. And, sire, by many other resouns maye ye se, and many wommen ben goode, and *eke here counseile goode* and profitable. And therfore, if ye wile truste to my counseil, I schal restore you youre doughter hool and sound; and eek I wil doon you so moche, that ye schul have honour in this cause.'

Whan Melibe had herd these wordes of his wif Prudens, he seide thus: 'I se wel that the word of Salomon is soth; he seith, that the wordes that ben spoken discretly by ordinaunce been hony-combes for thay yeven swetnes to the soule, and *holesomenesse* to the body. And, wyf, bycause of thy swete wordes, and eek for I have assayed and proved thi grete sapiens and thi grete trouthe, I wil governe me by thy counseil in alle thinges.'

'Now, sire,' quod dame Prudens, 'and syn ye vouchen sauf to be governed by my counseilyng, I wil enforme you how ye schul governe youre-self, in chesyng of youre counseil. Ye schul first in alle youre werkes mekely biseche to the hihe God, that he wol be your counseilour; and schape you to that entent that he yive you counseil and con-

fort, as taughte Toby his sone. At alle tymes thou schalt blesse God, and pray him to dresse thy wayes; and loke that alle thi counseiles be in him for evermore. Seint Jame eek saith: If eny of yow have neede of sapiens, axe it of God. And aftirward, thanne schul ye take counseil in youreself, and examine wel your thoughtes, of suche thinges as you thinkith that is best for youre profyt. And thanne schul ye dryve fro youre herte tho *thre thinges* that ben contrarie to good counseil; that is to say, ire, coveytise, and hastynes. First, he that axeth counseil of himself, certes, he moste be withoute ire, for many cause. The first is this: he that hath gret ire and wraththe in him-self, he weneth alwey he may do thing that he may not doo. And secoundly, he that is irous and wroth, he may not wel deme; and he that may not wel deme, may nought wel counseile. The thridde is this: that he that is irous and wroth, as saith Senec, may not speke but blameful thinges, and with his vicious wordes he stireth other folk to anger and to ire. And eek, sire, ye moste dryve coveitise out of youre herte. For thapostle saith that coveytise is roote of alle harmes. And trusteth wel, that a coveitous man ne can not deme ne thinke, but oonly to fulfille the ende of his coveitise; and certes that may never ben accomplised; for ever the more abundaunce that he hath of riches, the more he desireth. And, sire, ye moste also dryve out of your herte hastynes; for certes ye maye nought deme for the beste a sodein thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye moste avyse you on it ful

ofte. For as ye herde here biforn, the comune proverbe is this; that he that soone demeth, soone repentith. Sire, ye ben not alway in lik disposicioun, for certis som thing that som tyme semeth to yow that it is good for to doo, another tyme it semeth to you the contrarie. Whan ye han taken counseil in youre-selven, and han demed by good deliberacioun such thing as yow semeth best, thanne rede I you that ye kepe it secré. Bywreye nought youre counseil to no persone, but it so be that ye wene sicurly, that thurgh youre bywreyinge youre condicioun schal be to yow the more profytable. For Jhesus Syrac saith, Neither to thi foo ne to thi freend discovere not thy secre ne thy foly; for they wile yive you audience and lokyng and supportacioun in thi presence, and scorn in thin absence. Another clerk saith, that skarsly schalt thou fynde eny persone that may kepe counseil secreely. The book saith: Whil thou kepist thi counsail in thin herte, thou kepest it in thi prisoun; and whan thou bywreyest thi counseil to any wight, he holdeth the in his snare. And therfore yow is bettêr hyde youre counseil in youre herte, than prayen him to whom ye have bywreyed youre counseil, that he wol kepe it clos and stille. For Seneca seith: If so be that thou ne maist not thin owne counseil hyde, how darst thou preyen any other wight thi counseil secreely to kepe? But natheles, if thou wene securly that thy bywreying of thy counseil to a persone wol make thy condicioun stonde in the better plite, thanne schalt thou telle him thy counseil in this wise. First, thou shalt make no semblaunt wher

the were lever werre or pees, or this or that; ne schewe him not thi wille and thin entent; for truste wel that comunly these counseilours ben flaterers, namely the counselours of grete lordes, for thay enforcen hem alway rather to speke plesaunt wordes enclynyng to the lordes lust, than wordes that been trewe and profytable. And therfore men saye, that the riche man hath selden good counseil, but-if he have it of him-self. And after that thou schalt considere thy frendes and thy enemyes. And as touching thy frendes, thou schalt considere which of hem beth most faithful and most wise, and eldest and most approvyd in counsaylinge; and of hem schalt thou axe thy counsail, as the caas requireth.

'I say, that first ye schul clepe to your counseil youre frendes that ben trewe. For Salomon saith, *that* right as the hert of a man delitith in savour that is soote, right so the counseil of trewe frendes yeveth swetnes to the soule. He saith also, ther may no thing be likened to the trewe freend; for certes gold ne silver beth nought so moche worth as the goode wil of a trewe freend. And eek he sayde, that a trewe frend is a strong defens; who that it fyndeth, certes he fyndeth a gret tresour. Thanne schul ye eek considere if that youre trewe frendes ben discrete and wyse; for the book saith, Axe thi counseil alwey of hem that ben wyse. And by this same resoun schul ye clepe to youre counseil of youre frendes that ben of age, such as have i-seye sightes and ben expert in many thinges, and ben approvyd in counseylinges. For the book saith, that in olde men is the sapience,

and in longe tyme the prudence. And Tullius saith, that grete thinges ben not ay accompliced by strengthe, ne by delyvernes of body, but by good counseil, by auctorité of persones, and by science; the whiche thre thinges ne been not feble by age, but certis thay enforcen and encresen day by day. And thanne schul ye kepe this for a general reule. First schul ye clepe to youre counseil a fewe of youre frendes that ben especial. For Salomon saith, Many frendes have thou, but among a thousand chese the oon to be thy counseilour. For al be it so, that thou first ne telle thy counseil but to a fewe, thou mayst afterward telle it to mo folk, if it be neede. But loke alwey that thy counseilours have thilke thre condiciouns that I have sayd bifore; that is to saye, that thay ben trewe, and olde, and of wys experiens. And werke nought alwey in every need by oon counseilour alloone; for som tyme byhoveth it be counseiled by many. For Salomon saith, Salvacioun of thinges is wher as there beth many counseilors.

'Now sith that I have told yow of which folk ye schul be counseiled, now wille I telle yow which counseil ye ought eschiewe. First, ye schal *eschiewe* the counseil of fooles; for Salomon seith, Take no counseil of a fool, for he ne can not counseile but after his oughne lust and his affeccioun. The book seith, that the propreté of a fool is this: he troweth lightly harm of every wight, and lightly troweth alle bounté in him-self. Thow schalt eschiewe eek the counseil of alle flaterers, suche as enforcen hem rathere to prayse youre persone

by flaterie, than for to telle yow the sothfastnesse of thinges. Wherfore Tullius saith, Amonges alle pestilences that ben in frendschipe the grettest is flaterie. And therfore is it more neede that thou eschiewe and drede flaterers, more than eny other peple. The book saith, Thou schalt rather drede and flee fro the swete wordes of flaterers, then fro the egre wordes of thy frend that saith the thi sothes. Salamon saith, that the wordes of a flaterer is a snare to cacche in innocentz. He saith also, He that speketh to his frend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce, setteth a nette byfore his feet to cacchen him. And therfore saith Tullius, Encline not thin eeres to flaterers, ne tak no *counseil* of the wordes of flaterers. And Catoun saith, Avyse the wel, and eschiewe wordes of swetnes and of plesaunce. And eek thou schalt eschiewe the counselyng of thin olde enemyes that ben recounsiled. The book saith, that *no* wight retorneth *safly* into the grace of his olde enemyes. And Ysope saith, Ne trust not to hem, with which thou hast had som tyme werre or enmyté, ne telle not hem thy counseil. And Seneca telleth the cause why; it may not be, saith he, that wher as a greet fuyr hath longe tyme endured, that there ne leveth som vapour of hete. And therfore saith Salomon, In thin olde enemy truste thou nevere. For sicurly, though thin enemy be reconsiled, and make the cheer of humilité, and lowteth to the his heed, ne trist him never; for certes he makith thilke feyned humilité more for his profyt, than for eny love of thi persone; bycause he demyth to have victorie over thi persone by such feyned

countynaunce, the whiche victorie he might nought have by stryf and werre. And Petir Alfons saith: Make no felaschipe with thine olde enemyes, for if thou do hem bounté, they wile perverten it into wikkednes. And eek thou most eschiewe the counseilynge of hem that ben thy servauntz, and beren the gret reverence; for paraventure thai say it more for drede than for love. And therfore saith a philosophre in this wise: Ther is no wight parfytly trewe to him that he to sore dredeth. And Tullius saith, Ther is no might so gret of eny emperour that longe may endure, but-if he have more love of the peple than drede. Thow *schalt* also eschiewe the counseil of folk that ben dronkelewe, for thay ne can no counseil hyde. For Salomon saith, Ther regneth no priveté ther as is dronkenesse. Ye schul also have in suspect the counseil of such folk as counseileth you oon thing prively, and counseile yow the contrarie openly. For Cassiodorie saith, It is a maner sleighte to hindre, whan he schewith to doon oon thing openly, and werkith prively the contrarie. Thou schalt also eschiewe the counseil of wikked folkes; for the book saith, The counselyng of wikked folk is alway ful of fraude. And David saith, Blisful is that man that hath not folwed the counseilyng of wikked men or schrewes. Thow schalt also eschiewe the counseilynge of yonge folk, for here counseil is nought rype.

'Now, sire, syn I have schewed yow of what folk ye schul take youre counsail, and of whiche folk ye schullen *eschiewe* the counseil, now schal I teche yow how ye schul examyne youre counseil

after the doctrine of Tullius. In the examynyng of youre counseiloures, ye schul considre many thinges. Althirfirst ye schul considre that in thilke thing that thou proposist, and up what thing thou wilt have counseil, that verray trouthe be sayd and considerid; this is to sayn, telle trewely thy tale, For he that saith fals, may not wel be counseled in that cas of which he lyeth. And after this, thou schalt considere the thinges that accorden to that purpos for to do by thy counseil, if resoun accorde therto, and eke if thy might may accorde therto, and if the more part and the better part of thy counseilours accorde therto or noon. Thanne schalt thou considere what thing schal folwe of that consailynge; as hate, pees, werre, grace, profyt, or damage, and many other thinges; and in alle these thinges thou schalt chese the beste, and weyve alle other thinges. Thanne schalt thou considre of what roote engendered is the matier of thy counseil, and what fruyt *it* may conceive and engendre. Thow schalt also consider al these causes, from whens thai ben sprongen. And whan ye have examined youre counseil, as I have said, and which party is the better and more profitable, and han approved by many wise folk and olde, than schalt thow considre, if thou maist parforme it and make of it a good ende. For resoun wol nought that any man schulde bygynne a thing, but-if he mighte parforme it and make therof a good ende; ne no wight schulde take upon him so hevy a charge, that he mighte not bere it. For the proverbe saith, He that moche embrasith destreyneth litel. And

Catoun seith, Assay to do such thing as thou hast power to doon, lest that thy charge oppresse the so sore, that the bihove to wayve thing that thou hast bygonne. And if so be that thou be in doute, wher thou maist parforme a thing or noon, chese rather to suffre than bygynne. And Petre Alfons saith, If thou hast might to doon a thing, of which thou most repente, it is better nay than yee; this is to sayn, that the is better holde thy tonge stille than to speke. Than maye ye understonde by strenger resouns, that if thou hast power to parforme a werk, of which thou schalt repente, thanne is it better that thou suffre than bigynne. Wel seyn thay that defenden every wight to assaie thing of which he is in doute, whethir he may parforme it or noon. And after whan ye han examyned youre counseil, as I have sayd biforn, and knowen wel ye may parforme youre emprise, conferme it thanne sadly til it be at an ende.

'Now is it tyme and resoun that I schewe yow whanne, and wherfore, that ye maye chaunge youre counseil withouten reproef. Sothly, a man may chaunge his purpos and his counseil, if the cause cesseth, or whan a newe cause bytydeth. For the lawe seith, upon thinges that newely bitydeth, bihoveth newe counseil. And Seneca seith, If thy counseil be comen to the eeres of thin enemy, chaunge thy counsail. Thow maist also chaunge thy counseil, if so be that thou fynde that by errour, or by other processe, harm or damage may bytyde. Also thou chaunge thy counseil, if that *it* be dishonest, or elles cometh of dishonesté; for the lawes sayn, that alle the hestes that ben dishoneste ben of no

valieu; and eek, if it so be that it be impossible, or may not goodly be parformed or kept. And take this for a general reule, that every counseil that is affermed or strengthed so strongly that it may not be chaunged for no condicioun that may bitide, I say that thilke counseil is wikked.'

This Melibeus, whan he had herd the doctrine of his wyf dame Prudens, answerde in this wise. 'Dame,' quod he, 'yit as into this tyme ye han wel and covenably taught me, as in general, how I schal governe me in *the* chesynge and in *the* withholdynge of my counseiloures; but now wold I fayn ye wolde condescende as in especial, and telleth me what semeth or how liketh yow by oure counseiloures that we han chosen in oure present neede.'

'My Lord,' quod sche, 'I byseke yow in al humblesce, that ye wile not wilfully repplye against my resouns, ne distempre youre herte, though I say or speke thing that yow displesith; for God woot that, as in myn entent, I speke it for youre beste, for youre honour, and for your profyt eek, and sothly I hope that your benignité wol take it into pacience. For trusteth me wel,' quod sche, 'that youre counseil as in this caas ne schulde not (as for to speke propurly) be called a counseilyng, but a mocioun or a moevynge of foly, in which counseil ye han erred in many a sondry wise. First and forward, ye han erred in the gaderyng of youre counseilours; for ye schulde first han cleped a fewe folkes, if it hadde be neede. But certes ye han sodeinly cleped to your counseil a gret multitude of people, ful chargeous and ful anoyous for to

hiere. Also ye han erred, for ther as ye schulde oonly have clepid to youre counseil youre trewe frendes, olde and wise, ye have i-cleped straunge folk, yonge folk, false flatereres, and enemyes reconsiled, and folk that doon yow reverence withoute love. Eke also ye han erred, for ye han brought with yow to youre counseil ire, coveitise, and hastynes, the whiche thre thinges ben contrarious to every counsail honest and profitable; the whiche thre thinges ye have nought annentissched or destroyed, neyther in youre self ne in youre counseiloures, as ye oughte. Also ye have erred, for ye have schewed to youre counseilours youre talent and youre affeccioun to make werre, and for to doon vengeaunce anoon, *and* thay han espyed by youre wordes to what thinge ye ben enclined; and therfore have thay counseiled yow rather to youre talent than to youre profyt. Ye have erred also, for it semeth that yow sufficeth to have been counseiled by these counseilours only, and with litel avys, wher-as in so gret and so heigh a neede, it hadde be necessarious mo counseilours and more deliberacioun to parforme youre emprise. Ye have erred also, for ye have maked no divisioun bytwixe youre counsailours; this is to seyn, bitwix youre frendes and youre feyned counseilours; ne ye ne have nought i-knowe the wille of youre frendes, olde and wise, but ye have cast alle here wordes in an hochepoche, and enclyned youre herte to the more part and to the gretter nombre, and there be ye condescendid; and syn ye wot wel men schal alway fynde a gretter nombre of fooles than of wyse men, and

therfore the counsailes that ben at congregaciouns and multitudes of folk, ther as men taken more reward to the nombre than to the sapience of persones, ye se wel that in suche counseilynges fooles have maystrie.'

Melibeus answerde agayn and sayde: 'I graunte wel that I have erred; but there as thou hast told me to-forn, that he is nought to blame that chaungeth his counseilours in certeyn caas, and for certeyn juste causes, I am al redy to chaunge my counseilours right as thou wilt devyse. The proverbe saith, that for to do synne is mannysch, but certes for to presevere longe in synne is werk of the devyl.'

To this sentence anoon answerde dame Prudens, and saide: 'Examineth,' quod sche, 'youre counsail, and let us se which of hem hath spoke most resonably, and taught you best counsail. And for as moche as the examinacioun is necessarie, let us byginne at the surgiens and at the phisiciens, that first speken in this matiere. I say you that the surgiens and the phisiciens han sayd yow in youre counseil discretly, as hem ought; and in here speche sayden ful wisely, that to the office of hem appendith to doon to every wight honour and profyt, and no wight to annoy, and after here craft to do gret diligence unto the cure of hem which that thay have in here governaunce. And, sire, right as thay answerde wisely and discretly, right so rede I that thay be heighly and soveraignly guerdoned for here noble speche, and eek for they schullen do the more ententyf besynes in the curyng of youre doughter dere. For al be it so

that thai be youre frendes, therfore schul ye nought suffre that thay schul serve yow for nought, but ye oughte the rathere to guerdoune hem and schewe hem youre largesse. And as touchynge the proposiciouns whiche the phisiciens han schewed you in this caas, this is to sayn, that in maladyes oon contrarie is warisshed by another contrarie, I wolde fayn knowe thilke text and how thay understonde it, and what is youre entente.' 'Certes,' quod Melibeus, 'understonden it is in this wise; that right as thay han do me a contrarie, right so schold I do hem another; for right as thay han venged hem on me and doon me wrong, right so schal I venge me upon hem, and doon hem wrong; and thanne have I cured oon contrarie by another.' 'Lo, lo,' quod dame Prudence, 'how lightly is every man enclyned to his oughne plesaunce and to his oughne desir! Certes,' quod sche, 'the wordes of the phisiciens ne schulde nought have ben understonde sone in that wise; for certes wikkednesse is no contrarie to wickednesse, ne vengauns to vengeaunce, ne wrong to wrong, but thai ben semblable; and therfore on vengeaunce is nought warisshed by another vengeaunce, ne oon wrong by another wrong, but everych of hem encreseth and engreggith other. But certes the wordes of the phisiciens schul ben understonde in this wise; for good and wikkednesse ben tuo contraries, and pees and werre, vengeaunce and sufferaunce, discord and accord, and many other thinges; but, certes, wikkednes schal be warrisshed by goodnesse, discord by accord, werre by pees, and so forth of other thinges. And herto

accordith seint Paul the apostil in many places; he saith, Ne yeldith nought harm for harm, ne wikked speche for wikked speche; but do wel to him that doth the harm, and blésse him that *seith* the harme. And in many other places he amonesteth pees and accord. But now wil I speke to yow of the counseil, which was yive to yow by the men of lawe, and the wise folk, *and the olde folke*, that sayde alle by oon accord as ye have herd byfore, that over alle thinges ye schal do youre diligence to kepe youre persone, and to warnistore youre house; and seyden also, that in this yow aughte for to wirche ful avysily and with gret deliberacioun. And, sire, as to the firste poynt, that touchede to the kepinge of youre persone, ye schul understonde, that he that hath werre, schal evermore devoutly and mekely prayen biforn alle thinges, that Jhesu Crist wil of his mercy have him in his protecciouu, and ben his soverayn helpyng at his neede; for certes in this world ther nys no wight that may be counseiled or kept sufficauntly, withoute the kepinge of oure lord Jhesu Crist. To this sentence accordeth the prophete David, that seith: If God ne kepe not the citee, in ydel wakith he that kepith hit. Now, sire, thanne schul ye committe the keping of youre persone to youre trewe frendes, that ben approved and y-knowe, and of hem schul ye axen help, youre persone to kepe. For Catoun saith: If thou have neede of help, axe it of thy freendes, for ther is noon so good a phisicien at neede as is a trewe frend. And after this than schal ye kepe you fro alle straunge folkes, and fro lyeres, and

have alway in suspect here compaignye. For Pieres Alfons saith: Ne take no compaignie by the way of a straunge man, but so be that thou knowe him of a lenger tyme; and if so be he falle into thy compaignye paraventure withouten thin assent, enquere thanne, as subtilly as thou maist, of his conversacioun, and of his lyf bifore, and feyne thy way, and say that thou wilt go thider as thou wolt nought goon; and if he bere a spere, hold the on the right syde, and if he bere a swerd, holde the on the lyft syde. And so after this, thanne schul ye kepe you wisely from al such peple as I have sayd bifore, and hem and here counseil eschiewe. And after this, thanne schul ye kepe yow in such manere, that for eny presumpcioun of youre strengthe, that ye despise not the might of youre adversarie so lite, that ye lete the kepinge of youre persone for youre presumpcioun; for every wis man dredeth his enemy. And Salomon saith, Weleful is he that of alle hath drede; for certes he that thurgh hardynes of his herte, and thurgh the hardinesse of himself, hath to gret presumpcioun, him schal evyl bitide. Thanne schal ye evermore counterwayte embusshementz and alle espiaille. For Senec saith, that the wise man that dredith harmes, eschieweth harmes, ne he ne fallith into noone perils, that perils eschieweth. And al be it so that the seme that thou art in siker place, yit schaltow alway do thy diligence in kepyng of thy persone; this is to saye, be not necgligent to kepe thy persone, nought oonly for thy gretteste enemyes, but fro thy lest enemyes. Senec saith: A man that is wel avysed, he dredith

his lest enemy. Ovide seith, that the litel wesil wol sle the grete bole and the wilde hert. And the book saith, a litel thorn wol prikke a king ful sore, and an hound wol holde the wilde boore. But natheles, I say not that ye schul be so moche a coward, that ye doute where is no neede or drede. The book saith, that som folk have gret lust to disceyve, but yit thay dreden hem to be deceyved. Yet schal ye drede to ben empoisoned. And kepe the fro the companye of scorners; for the book saith, with scorners make no compaignye, but flee hem and here wordes as venym.

'Now as to the secounde poynt, where as youre wise counseilours warnede yow to warmstore youre hous with gret diligence, I wolde fayn wite how that ye understoode thilke wordes, *and* what is your sentence.' Melibeus answerde and saide: 'Certes, I understonde it in this wise, that I schal warnstore myn hous with toures, suche as han castiles and other maner edifices, and armure, and artilries; by suche thinges I may my persone and myn hous so kepen and edifien and defenden, that myn enemyes schul be in drede myn hous to approche.'

To this sentence answerde dame Prudence: 'Warmstorynge,' quod sche, 'of heihe toures and grete edifices, *is* with grete costages and grete travaile; and whan that thay ben accomplised, yit beth thay nought worth a straw, but-if they be defended by trewe frendes, that beth olde and wise. And understondeth that the grettest strength or garnisoun that the riche man may have, as wel to kepe his persone as his goodes, is that he be

biloved with his subgites and with his neighebours. For thus saith Tullius, that ther is a maner garnisoun that no man may vanquisshe ne discomfite, and that is a lord to be biloved with his citezeins and of his peple.

'Now thanne as to youre thridde poynt, where as youre olde and wyse counseillours sayde, ye oughte nought sodeinly ne hastily procede in this neede, but that ye oughte purveyen yow and apparaile yow in this caas with greet diligence and gret deliberacioun; trewely, I trowe, that thay sayden soth and right wisely. For Tullius saith: 'In every nede, er thou bigynne it, apparaile the with gret diligence.' Thanne say I, that in vengeance takinge, in werre, in bataile, and in warmstoringe of thin hous, er thou bygynne, I rede that thou apparaille the therto, and do it with gret deliberacioun. For Tullius saith, that long apparaylyng byfore the bataille maketh schort victorie. And Cassidorus saith, the garnisoun is stronger whan it is long tyme avysed.

'But now let us speke of the counseil that was accorded by youre neighebours, suche as doon you reverence withoute love, youre olde enemyes recounsiled, *youre flatereres*, that counseile yow certeyn thinges pryvely, and openly counseile yow the contrarie, the yonge also, that counsaile yow to make werre and venge yow anoon. And certes, sire, as I have sayd byforn, ye have gretly erred to have cleped such maner folk to youre counseil, whiche be now repreved by the resouns byfore sayd. But natheles let us now descende to the purpos special. Ye schul first procede after the

doctrine of Tullius. Certes, the trouthe of this matier or this counseil nedeth nought diligently enquere, for it is wel wist whiche it ben that doon to yow this trespas and vilonye, and how many trespasoures, and in what maner thay han to yow doon al this wrong and al this vilonye. And after that schul ye examyne the secounde condicioun, which Tullius addith therto in this matier. Tullius put a thing, which that he clepeth *consentynge;* this is to sayn, who ben thay, and whiche ben thay, and how many that consentide to this matiere, and to thy counsail in thy wilfulnesse, to do hasty vengeaunces. And let us considere also who ben tho, and how many ben tho, that *consentiden* to youre adversaries. And certes, as to the first poynt, it is wel knowen whiche folk ben thay that consentide to youre first wilfulnes. For trewly, alle tho that counsaillede yow to make sodeyn werre, beth nought youre frendes. Let us considre whiche ben tho that ye holde so gretly youre frendes, as to youre persone; for al be it so that ye be mighty and riche, certes ye been alloone; for certes ye have no childe but a doughter, ne ye have no bretheren, ne cosins germayns, ne noon other neigh kynrede, wherfore that youre enemyes for drede schulden stynte for to plede with you, and struye youre persone. Ye knowe also, that youre richesses mooten in divers parties be departed; and whan every wight hath his part, thay wol take but litel reward to venge thy deth. But thyne enemyes ben thre, and have many children, bretheren, cosynes, and othere neigh kynrede; and though it so were ye hadde

slayn of hem tuo or thre, yet dwellen there y-nowe to wreke here deth and sle thi persone. And though so were that youre kynrede were more sekir and stedefast than the kynrede of youre adversaries, yit natheles youre kynrede nis but *a fer* kynrede, and litel sib to yow, and the kyn of youre enemyes ben neigh sibbe to hem. And certes, as in that, here condicioun is bet than youres. Thanne let us considere also if the counseilynge of hem that counseilede yow to take sodein vengeance, whethir it accorde to resoun. And certes, ye knowe wel, nay; for as by right and resoun, ther may no man take vengeaunce upon no wight, but the jugge that hath jurediccioun of it, whan it is y-graunted him to take thilke vengeaunce hastily, or attemperelly, as the lawe requireth. And yit moreover of thilke word that Tullius clepith consentynge, thou schalt considre, if thy might and thy power may consente and suffice to thy wilfulnes and to thy counseilours. And certes, thou maist wel saye, that nay; for sicurly, as for to speke properly, we maye doo no thing but oonly oon thing which we maye do rightfully; and certes rightfully maye ye take no vengeance, as of youre owne auctorité. Than may ye se that youre power consentith not, ne accordith not, with youre wilfulnesse.

'Let us now examyne the thridde poynt, that Tullius clepeth consequente. Thou schalt understonde, that the vengeance that thou purposiddest for to take, is consequent, and thereof folweth another vengeaunce, peril, and werre, and other damages withoute nombre, of whiche we be not

war, as at this tyme. And as touching the fourthe poynt, that Tullius clepeth engendrynge, thou schalt considre that this wrong which that is doon to the, is engendred of the hate of thin enemyes, and of the vengeaunce takinge up that wolde engendre another vengeaunce, and moche sorwe and wastyng of riches, as I sayde. Now, sire, as to the poynt that Tullius clepith causes, whiche that *is* the laste poynt, thou schalt understonde that the wrong that thou hast receyved hath certeyn causes, whiche that clerkes calle *oriens*, and *efficiens*, and *causa longinqua*, and *causa propinqua*, this is to saye, the fer cause, and the neigh cause. For the fer cause is almighty God, that is cause of alle thinges; the nere cause is thi thre enemyes; the cause accidental was hate; the causes materiales been the fyve woundes of thy doughter; the cause formal is the maner of here werkyng, that brought in laddres and clombe in at thin wyndowes; the cause final was for to sle thy doughter; hit lettede nought in as moche as was in hem. But for to speke of the fer cause, as to what ende thay schal come, or what schal finally betyde of hem in this cause, can I not deme, but by *conjectinge* and by supposyng, for we schul suppose, that thay schul come to a wikked ende, bycause that the book of Decrees saith: Seelden, or with gret peyne, ben causes i-brought to a good ende, whan thay ben evyl bygonne.

'Now, sire, if men wolde axe me, why that *God* suffrede men to do yow this wrong and vilonye, certes I can not wel answere, as for no sothfastnes. For the apostil saith, that the sciences and the

juggements of oure Lord God almyghty ben ful deepe, ther may no man comprehende ne serchen hem sufficiauntly. Natheles, by certeyn presumpciouns and conjectinges, I holde and bilieve, that God, which that is ful of justice and of right-wisnesse, hath suffred this to betyde, by juste cause resonable. Thy name, Melibe, is to say, a man that drynketh hony. Thou hast y-dronke so moche hony of sweete temperel richesses and delices and honours of this world, that thou art dronke, and hast foryete Jhesu Crist thy creatour; thou hast not doon him such honour and reverence as the oughte to doone, ne thou hast nought wel taken keep to the wordes of Ovide, that saith, Under the hony of thy goodes of thy body is hid the venym that sleeth thi soule. And Salamon saith, If thou have founde hony, ete of it that sufficeth; for if thou ete of it out of mesure, thou schalt spewe, and be nedy and povere. And peraventure Crist hath the in despit, and hath torned away fro the his face and his eeres of misericorde; and also he hath suffred that thou hast ben punysshed in the maner that thou hast i-trespassed. Thou hast doon synne ayeinst oure Lord Crist, for certes the thre enemyes of mankinde, that is to saye, thy flessehe, the feend, and the world, thou hast y-suffred hem to entre into thin herte wilfully, by the wyndow of thy body, and hast nought defended thiself sufficiently agayns here *assautis*, and here temptaciouns, so that thay have woundid thi soule in fyve places, this is to sayn, the dedly synnes that ben entred into thin herte by thy fyve *wittes;* and in the same maner oure Lord Crist hath wolde

and suffred, that thy thre enemyes ben entred into thin hous by tho wyndowes, and have i-woundid thi doughter in the forsayde maner.'

'Certes,' quod Melibeus, 'I se wel that ye enforce yow moche by wordes to overcome me, in such manere, that I schal not venge me on myn enemyes, schewynge me the perils and the yveles that mighten falle of this vengeaunce. But whoso wolde considre in alle vengeaunces the periles and the yveles that mighten folwe of vengeaunces takynge, a man wolde never take vengeaunce, and that were harm; for by vengeaunce takynge be wikked men destruyed and dissevered fro the goode men. And thay that have wille to wikkednes, restreignen here wikked purpos, whan thay seen the punysshyng and the chastisyng of trespasours.

'And yit say I more, that right so as a sengle persone synneth in taking of vengeaunce, right so the jugge synneth if he doo no vengeaunce on him that it hath deserved. For Senec saith thus: That maister, he saith, is good *that* reprove*th* schrewes. And as Cassoder saith: A man dredeth to doon outrage, whan he woot and knoweth that it displeseth to the jugges and the soveraynes. And another saith: The jugge that dredeth to demen right, maketh schrewes. And seint Poul thappostoil saith in his epistil, whan he writeth to the Romayns: The jugges bere not the spere withoute cause, but thay beren it to punysshe the schrewes and mysdoers, and for to defende with the goode men. If ye wol take vengeaunce on youre enemyes, ye schul retourne or have recours to the jugges, that have jurediccioun upon hem, and he schal

punissche hem, as the law axeth and requireth.' 'Ah!' quod Melibeus, 'this vengeaunce liketh me no thing. I bythenke me now, and take heed, how Fortune hath norissched me fro my childhode, and hath holpe me to passen many a strayt passage; now wol I aske her that sche schal, with Goddes help, helpe me my schame for to venge.'

'Certes,' quod Prudence, 'if ye wil wirche by my counseil, ye schul not assaye Fortune by no maner way, ne *ye* schul not lene ne bowe unto hire, after the word of Senec; for thinges that beth folly*ly done*, and that beth *done* in hope of Fortune, schul never come to good ende. And as the same Senek saith: The more cleer and the more schynynge that Fortune is, the more brutil, and the sonner breketh sche. So trusteth nought in hire, for sche is nought stedefast ne stable: for whan thou wenest or trowest to be most *siker or* seur of hir help, sche wol fayle and deceyve the. And wher as ye saye, that Fortune hath norisshed yow fro youre childhode, I say that in so mochel ye schul the lasse truste in hire and in hire witte. For Senek saith: What man that is norissched by Fortune, sche maketh him a gret fool. Now siththe ye desire and axe vengeaunce, and the vengeaunce that is doon *after the lawe and beforne* the *juge ne liketh yowe nought*, and the vengeaunce that is doon in hope of Fortune, is perilous and uncerteyn, thanne haveth *ye* noon other remedye, but for to have recours unto the soveraigne jugge, that vengith alle vilonies and wronges; and he schal venge yow, after that himself witnesseth, where as he saith: Leveth the vengeaunce to me, and I schal yelde it.'

Melibeus answerd: 'If I ne venge me nought of the vilonye that men have doon unto me, I schal sompne *or* warne hem that han doon to me that vilonye, and alle othere, to doo me another vilonye. For it is writen: *If thou* tak no vengeaunce of an old vilonye, thou *sompnest* thin adversarie do the a newe vilonye. And also, for my suffraunce, men wolde do me so moche vilonye, that I mighte neither bere it ne susteyne it; and so schulde I be put over lowe. For men say, in moche sufferynge schal many thinges falle unto *the*, whiche thou schalt nought mowe suffre.' 'Certes,' quod Prudence, 'I graunte yow wel, that over mochil suffraunce is nought good, but yit folwith it nought thereof, that every persone to whom men doon vilonye, take of it vengeaunce. For it appertieneth and longeth al oonly to the jugges, for thay schul venge the vilonyes and the injuries; and therfore the auctoritees that ye have sayd above been oonly understonden in the jugges; for whan thay suffre to mochil the wronges and the vilonyes that ben doon withoute punysshyng, thay somne not a man oonly to doo newe wronges, but thay comaunde hit. Also the wise man saith: The jugge that correcteth not the synnere, comaundith and byddith him doon another synne. And the jugges and sovereignes mighten in here lond so mochil suffren of the schrewes and mysdoeres, that thay schulde by such suffraunce, by proces of tyme, wexen of such power and might, that thay schulde put out the jugges and the sovereignes from here places, and atte laste do hem lese here lordschipes. But lete us now putte, that ye han leve to venge

yow; I say ye ben nought of might ne power as now to venge you; for if *ye* wolde make comparisoun as to the might of youre adversaries, ye schulde fynde in many thinges, that I have i-schewed yow er this, that here condicioun is bettre than youres, and therfore say I, that it is good as now, that ye suffre and be pacient.

'Forthermore ye knowe *wel* that after the comune sawe, it is a woodnesse, a man to stryve with a strenger or a more mighty man than himselven is; and for to stryve with a man of evene strengthe, that is to say*e*, with as strong a man as he is, it is peril; and for to stryve with a weykere, it is a folye; and therfore schulde a man fle stryvynge as moche as he mighte. For Salamon seith: It is a gret worschipe, a man to kepe him fro noyse and stryfe. And if it so bifalle or happe that a man of gretter might and strengthe than thou art do the grevaunce, studie and busye the rather to stille the same grevaunce, than for to venge the. For Senec saith, he putteth him in a gret peril that stryveth with a gretter man than he him selven is. And Catoun saith: If a man of heiher estat or degré, or more mighty then thou, do the an*oye* other grevaunce, suffre him; for he that hath oones don the a grievaunce, may another tyme relieve the and helpe the.

'Yit sette I a caas, ye have bothe might and licence for to venge yow, I say ther ben ful many thinges that schulde restreinge yow of vengeaunce takynge, and make yow to encline to suffre, and to have pacience of the wronges that han ben doon to yow. First and forward, ye wol considre the

defautes that ben in youre owne persone, for whiche defautes God hath suffred yow to have this tribulacioun, as I have sayd yow herbyfore. For the poete saith, We oughten paciently to suffre the tribulacioun that cometh to us, whan that we thenken and consideren, that we han deserved to have hem. And seint *Gregorie* saith, that whan a man considereth wel the nombre of his defautes, and of his synnes, the peynes and the tribulaciouns that he suffereth semen the lasse unto him. And in as moche as him thenkith his synnes the more hevy and grevous, in so moche his peyne is the lighter and the more esier unto him. Also ye oughten to encline and bowe youre herte, to take the pacience of oure Lord Jhesu Christ, as saith seint Peter in his Epistles. Jhesu Christ, he seith, hath suffred for us, and yiven ensample unto every man to folwe and sewe him; for he dede never synne, ne never cam *a* vileyns worde out of his mouth. Whan men cursed him, he cursed hem not; and whan men beete him, he manased hem not. Also the gret pacience which that seintes that been in Paradys han had in tribulaciouns that thay have had and suffred withoute desert or gult, oughte moche to stire you to pacience. Forthermore, ye schul enforce yow to have pacience, consideringe that the tribulaciouns of this world but litel while enduren, and soon passed ben and goon, and the joye that a man secheth to have by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable; after that the apostil seith in his Epistil: the joye of God, he saith, is perdurable, that is to say, evermore lastynge. Also troweth and bilieveth stedefastly, that he is

not wel norisched and taught, that can nought have pacience, or wil nought receyve pacience. For Salamon saith, that the doctrine and the witte of a man is i-knowe by pacience. And in another place he seith: He that hath pacience governeth him by gret prudence. And the same Salamon seith, that the wrathful and the angry man maketh noyses, and the pacient man attempereth and stilleth him. He seith also: It is more worth to be pacient than for to be right strong. And he that may have his lordschipe of his oughne herte, is more worth and more to preise than he that by his force and by his strengthe taketh grete citees. And therfore saith seint Jame in his Epistil, that pacience is a gret vertu of perfeccioun.'

'*Certes,*' *quod Melibe,* '*I graunte yowe, dame Prudence, that pacience is a grete vertue of perfeccione*; but every man may not have the perfeccioun that ye seekyn, ne I am not of the nombre of right parfyte men; for myn herte may never be in pees, unto the tyme it be venged. And al be it so, that it was a gret peril to myne enemyes to don me a vilonye in takinge vengeaunce upon me, yit tooken thay noon heede of the peril, but fulfilden here wikked desir and her corrage; and therfore me thenketh men oughten nought repreve me, though I putte me in a litel peril for to venge me, and though I do a gret excesse, that is to saye, that I venge oon outrage by another.'

'A!' quod dame Prudence, 'ye saye youre wille and as yow likith; but in noon caas in the world a man ne schulde nought doon outrage ne excesse for to venge him. For Cassidore saith, as evel

doth he that avengith him by outrage, as he that doth the outrage. And therfore ye schul venge yow after the ordre of right, that is to sayn, by the lawe, and nought by excesse, ne by outrage. And also if ye wile venge yow of the outrage of youre adversaries, in other maner than right comaundeth, ye synnen. And therefore saith Senec, that a man schal never venge schrewednes by schrewednes. And if ye saye that right axeth a man to defende violence by vyolence, and fightyng by fightynge; certes, ye saye soth, whan the defence is doon anoon withouten intervalle, or withouten taryinge or dilay, for to defenden him, and nought for to venge him. And it bihoveth a man putte such attemperance in his defence, that men have no cause ne matiere to repreven him that defendith him, of excesse and outrage. Pardé! ye knowe wel, that ye make no defence as now for to defende yow, but for to venge yow; and so semeth it, that ye have no wille to do youre wille attemperelly; and therfore me thenkith that pacience is good. For Salamon saith, that he that is not pacient schal have gret harm.' 'Certes,' quod Melibeus, 'I graunte you wel, that whan a man is inpacient and wroth *of that that toucheth him nouht, and that that apperteigneth nouht to him, thouh it harme him it is no wondere.* For the lawe saith, that he is coupable that entremettith him or mellith him with such thing, as aperteyneth not unto him. Dan Salamon saith, He that entremetteth him of the noyse or stryf of another man, is lik him that takith the *straunge* hound by the eeres; for right as he that takith *a straunge* hound

by the eeres is other while biten with the hound, right in the same wise, it is resoun that he have harm, that by his impacience melleth him of the noise of another man, where it aperteyneth not to him. But ye schul knowe wel, that this dede, that is to sayn, myn disease and my grief, toucheth me right neigh. And therfore, though I be wroth, it is no mervayle; and (savynge your grace) I can not see that it mighte gretly harme me, though I toke vengeaunce, for I am richer and more mighty than myne enemyes been; and wel knowe ye, that by money and by havynge of grete possessiouns, ben alle the thinges of this world governede. And Salamon saith, that alle thinges obeyen to moneye.'

Whan Prudence had herd hir husbonde to avaunten him of his riches and of his monye, and dispreisynge the pouer of his adversaries, tho sche spak and sayde in this wyse: 'Certes, deere sire, I graunte yow that ye ben riche and mighty, and that richesse is good to hem that wel have geten it, and that wel conne use it. For right as the body of a man may not be withoute the soule, no more may a man lyve withoute temperel goodes, and by richesse may a man gete him greet frendschipe. And therfore saith Pamphilles: If a neet-hurdes doughter, he saith, be riche, sche may cheese of a thousand men, which she wol take to hir housbonde; for of a thousand men oon wil not forsake hir ne refuse hire. And this Pamphilles seith also: If thou be right happy, that is to sayn, if thou be right riche, thanne schalt thou fynde a gret nombre of felawes and frendes; and if thy fortune chaunge,

that thou waxe pore, fare wel frendschipe, for thou schalt ben aloone withouten eny companye, but if it be the compaignye of pore folk. And yit saith this Pamphillus moreover, that they that ben thral and bonde of linage, schullen ben maad worthy and noble by richesse. And right so as by richesse ther come many goodes, right so by povert comen ther many harmes and yvels; *for arete poverté constreyneth a man to done mony yvels.* And therfore clepeth Cassidore povert *the moder of* ruyne, that is to sayn, the moder of overthrowyng or fallynge doun. And therfore *seith* Pieres Alphons: Oon of the grettest adversites of this world, is whan a freeman by kyn or burthe is constreigned by povert to eten the almes of his enemyes. And the same seith Innocent in oon of his bookes, that sorweful and unhappy is the condicioun of a povere begger, for if he axe nought his mete, he deyeth for hungir, and if he axe, he deyeth for schame; and algates the necessité constreigneth hym to axe. And therfore saith Salamon, that bettre it is to deye, than to have such povert. And as the same Salamon saith; Bettir is to deye on bitter deth, than for to lyve in such a wyse.

'By these resouns that I have sayd unto yow, and by many another resoun that I knowe and couthe say, I graunte yow that richesses ben goode to hem that gete hem wel, and to hem that hem wel usen; and therfore wol I schewe yow how ye schulde bere yow in getyng of riches, and in what maner ye schulde use hem. First, ye schulde gete hem withoute gret desir, by good leysir, sokyngly, and

nought over hastily; for a man that is to desiryngе for to gete riches, abandoneth him first to thefte and to alle othere yveles. And therfore saith Salamon: He that hastith him to bisyly to waxe riche, schal ben noon innocent. He saith also, that the riches that hastily cometh to a man, soone and lightly goth and passeth fro a man, but that richesse that cometh alway litel and litel, waxeth alway and multiplieth. And, sire, ye schal gete richesse by youre witte, and by youre travayle, unto youre profyt, and that withoute wrong or harm doynge to eny other persone. For the lawe saith, that no man maketh himself riche, that doth harm to another wight; that is to saye, that nature defendeth and forbedith by right, that no man make him-self riche unto the harm of another persone. Tullius saith, that no sorwe ne drede of deth, ne *no thing* that may falle to a man, is so moche ayeinst nature, as a man to encresce his oughne profyt to the harm of another man. And though the grete men and riche men gete richesse more lightly than thou, yit schalt thou not be ydil ne slowe to thy profyt, for thou schalt in alle wise flee ydilnes. For Salamon saith, that ydelnesse techith a man to do many yveles. And the same Salamon saith, that he that travaileth and besieth him to tilye the lond, schal ete the breed; but he that is ydil, and casteth him to no busynesse ne occupacioun, schal falle into povert, and deye for hunger. And he that is ydel and slough, can never fynde him tyme for to do his profyt. For ther is a versifiour saith, the ydel man excuseth him in wynter, bycause of the grete colde, and in somer by en-

chesoun of the grete hete. For these causes, saith Catoun, waketh, and enclineth yow nought over moche for to slepe, for over moche reste norischeth and causeth many vices. And therfore saith seint Jerom: Doth some goode deedes, that the devel, which that is oure enemy, ne fynde yow unoccupied; for the devel ne takith not lightly unto his werkes suche as he fyndeth occupied in goode werkes. Thanne thus in getynge of riches ye moot flee ydelnesse. And afterward ye schul use the richesses, the whiche ye han geten by youre witte and by youre travaile, in such a maner, that men holde yow not skarce ne to sparynge, ne to fool large, that is to say, over large a spender. For right as men blamen an averous man, bycause of his skarseté and chyncherie, in the same manere is he to blame, that spendeth over largely. And therfore saith Catoun: Use, he saith, thi richesses that thou hast y-geten in such a manere, that *men* have no matier ne cause to calle the neither wrecche ne chynche; for it is gret schame to a man to have a pover herte and a riche purse. He saith also: The goodes that thou hast i-geten, use hem by mesure, that is to saye, spende hem mesurably; for thay that folily wasten and spenden the goodes that thay have, whan thay have no more propre of here oughne, thay schape hem to take the goodes of another man. I say thanne ye schul flee avarice, usynge your richesse in such manere, that *men seie nouht that* youre *richesse* be buried, but that ye have hem in youre might and in youre weldynge. For the wise man reproveth the averous man, and saith thus in tuo versus: Wherto and

why burieth a man his goodes by his gret avarice, and knowith wel, that needes most he deye, for deth is the ende of every man, as in this present lif? And for what cause or enchesoun joyneth he him, or knetteth him so fast unto his goodes, that alle his wittes mowe nought dissever him, or departe him fro his goodes, and knowith wel, or oughte knowe wel, that whan he is deed, he schal no thing bere with him out of this world? And therfore seith seint Austyn, that the averous man is likned unto helle, that the more that it swolwith, the more it desireth to swolwe and devoure. And as wel as ye wolde eschewe to be cleped an averous man or chinche, as wel schulde ye kepe yow and governe yow, in such a wise, that men clepe yow nought fool large. Therfore saith Tullius: The goodes, he saith, of thin hous schulde nought ben hidde ne kepte so clos, but that thay mighte ben opened by pité and by bonaireté; that is to sayn, to yive hem part that han gret neede; ne thy goodes schul not be so open, to be every mannes goodes.

'Aftirward, in getynge of youre richesses, and in usynge hem, ye schul alway have thre thinges in youre herte, that is to say, oure lord God, conscience, and good name. First, ye schul have God in youre herte, and for no riches ye schul in no manere doo no thing which mighte displese God that is your creatour and youre maker. For after the word of Salamon, it is better to have litil good with love of God, than to have mochil good and tresor, and lese the love of his lord God. And the prophete saith: Better is to ben a good man,

and have litel good *and* tresore, than to ben holden a schrewe, and have gret riches. And yit say I forthermore, that ye schuln alway doon youre businesse to gete yow riches, so that ye gete hem with good conscience. And the apostil seith, ther nys thing in this world of which we schuln have so gret joye, as whan oure conscience bereth us good witnes. And the wise man seith: The substaunce of a man is ful good, whan synne is not in his conscience. Afterward, in getynge of youre richesses, and in usynge of hem, thou most have gret busynesse and gret diligence, that youre good name be alway kept and conserved. For Salamon saith: Better it is, and more aveilith a man, for to have a good name, than for to have gret riches. And therfore he saith in another place: Do gret diligence, saith Salamon, in kepynge of thy frend, and of thy good name, for it schal lenger abyde with the, than eny tresor, be it never so precious. And certes, he schulde nought be cleped a gentil man, that after God and good conscience, alle thinges left, ne doth his diligence and busynesse to kepe his good name. And Cassidore saith, that it is signe of a good man and a gentil, or of a gentil herte, whan a man loveth or desireth to have a good name. And therfore saith seint Augustyn, that ther ben tuo thinges that ben necessarie and needful; and that is good conscience and good loos; that is to sayn, good conscience in thin oughne persone in-ward, and good loos of thin neghebor out-ward. And he that trusteth him so moche in his good conscience, that he despiseth and settith at nought his good name or loos, and

rekketh nought though he kepe not his good name, nys but a cruel churl.

'Sire, now have I schewed yow how ye schulde doon in getyng of good and riches, and how ye schulde use hem; I see wel that for the trust that ye have in youre riches, ye wolde meve werre and bataile. I counseile yow that ye bygynne no werre in trust of youre riches, for thay suffisen not werres to mayntene. And therfore saith a philosophre: That man that desireth and wol algate have werre, schal never have sufficeaunce; for the richere that he is, the gretter dispense most he make, if he wol have worschipe or victorie. And Salamon saith: The gretter riches that a man hath, the moo despendours he hath. And, deere sire, al be it so that for youre riches ye mowe have moche folk, yit byhoveth it not ne it is not good to bygynne werre, ther as ye may in other maner have pees unto youre worschipe and profyt; for the victorie of batailles that ben in this world, lith not in gret nombre or multitude of poeple, ne in vertu of man, but it lith in the wille and in the hond of oure lord God almighty. And Judas Machabeus, which was Goddes knight, whan he schulde fighte ayeinst his adversaries, that hadde a gretter nombre and a gretter multitude of folk and strengere than was the poeple of this Machabe, yit he reconforted his litel poeple, and sayde ryght in this wise: As lightly, quod he, may oure lord God almighty yive victory to fewe folk, *as to mony folke;* for the victorie of batailles cometh nought by the grete nombre of poeple, but it cometh fro oure lord God of heven. And, dere sire, for as moche as

ther is no man certeyn, if it be worthi that God yive him victorie or nought, after that that Salamon saith, therfore every man schulde gretly drede werres to bygynne. And bycause that in batailles falle many mervayles and periles, and happeth other while, that as soone is the grete man slayn as the litel man; and, as it is writen in the secounde book of Kynges, the deedes of batayles be aventurous, and no thing certeyn, for as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as another; and *for ther* is gret peril in werre, therfore schulde a man flee and eschewe werre in as moche as a man may goodly. For *sothly* Salamon saith: He that loveth peril, schal falle in peril.'

After that dame Prudens hadde spoke in this maner, Mellibe answerde and sayde: 'I se wel, dame, that by youre faire wordes and by youre resouns, that ye have schewed me, that the werre liketh yow no thing; but I have not yit herd youre counseil, how I schal doo in this neede.' 'Certes,' quod sche, 'I counseile yow that ye accorde with youre adversaries, and that ye have pees with hem. For seint Jame saith in his Epistles, that by concord and pees, the smale ryches wexen grete, and by debaat and discord the gret richesses fallen doun. And ye knowe wel, that oon of the moste grettest and soveraign thinges that is in this world, is unité and pees. And therfore saith oure lord Jhesu Crist to his aposteles in this wise: Wel happy and blessed be thay that loven and purchacen pees, for thay ben called children of *God*.' 'A!' quod Melibe, 'now se I wel, that ye loven not myn honour, ne my worschipe. And *ye* knoweth

wel that myne adversaries han bygonne this debate and brige by here outrage, and ye see wel that thay require ne praye me not of pees, ne thay askyn nought to be recounseild; wol ye thanne that I goo and meke me unto hem, and crie hem mercy? For sothe that were not my worschipe; for right as men seyn, that over gret pryde engendreth dispisyng, so fareth it by to gret humbleté or mekenes.' Thanne bygan dame Prudence to make semblant of wraththe, and sayde: 'Certes, sire, save youre grace, I love youre honour and youre profyt as I doo myn owne, and ever have doon; ye ne mowe noon other seyn; and yit if I hadde sayd, ye scholde have purchaced pees and the reconciliacioun, I ne hadde not moche mystake in me, ne seyd amys. For the wise man saith: The discencioun bigynneth by another man, and the reconsilynge bygynneth by thyself. And the prophete saith: Flee schame and schrewednesse and doo goodnesse; seeke pees and folwe it, as moche as in the is. Yet seith he not, that ye schul rather pursewe to youre adversaries for pees, than thei schul to yow; for I knowe wel that ye be so hard-herted, that ye wil doo no thing for me; and Salamon saith: He that is over hard-herted, atte laste he schal myshappe and mystyde.'

Whan Melibe hadde seyn dame Prudence make semblaunce of wraththe, he sayde in this wise: 'Dame, I pray yow that ye be not displesed of thinges that I say, for ye knoweth wel that I am angry and wroth, and that is no wonder; and thay that ben wroth, wot not wel what thay doon, ne what thay saye. Therfore the prophete saith, that

troublit eyen have no cleer sight. But sayeth and counsaileth me forth as yow liketh, for I am redy to doo right as ye wol desire. And if ye reprove me of my folye, I am the more holde to love yow and to prayse yow. For Salamon saith, that he that repreveth him that doth folie, he schal fynde gretter grace than he that deceyveth him by swete wordes.' Thanne sayde dame Prudens: 'I make no semblant of wraththe ne of anger, but for youre grete profyt. For Salamon saith: He is more worth that reproveth or chydeth a fool for his folie, schewynge him semblant of wraththe, than he that supporteth him and prayseth him in his mysdoyng and laugheth at his folie. And this same Salamon saith afterward, that by the sorweful visage of a man, that is to sayn, by sory and hevy countenaunce of a man, the fool correcteth himself and amendeth.' Thanne sayde Melibeus: 'I schal not conne answere to so many faire resouns as ye putten to me and schewen; sayeth schortly youre wille and youre counseil, and I am al redy to fulfille and parfourme it.'

Thanne dame Prudence discovered al hire counsail and hire wille unto him and sayde: 'I counseile yow,' quod sche, 'above alle thinges, that ye make pees bitwen God and yow, and beth reconsiled unto him and to his grace; for *as* I have sayd yow herbiforn, God hath suffred yow have this *tribulacione and* disease for youre synnes; and if ye do as I say yow, God wol sende youre adversaries unto yow, and make hem falle at youre feet, al redy to doo youre wille and youre comaundment. For Salamon saith: Whan the con-

dicioun of man is plesant and likyng to God, he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries, and constreigneth hem to biseke him of pees and of grace. And I pray yow let me speke with youre adversaries in privé place, for thay schul not knowe it by youre wille or youre assent; and thanne, whan I knowe here wille and here entent, I may counseile yow the more seurly.'

'Dame,' quod Melibeus, 'doth youre wille and youre likyng, for I putte me holly in youre disposicioun and ordinaunce.' Thanne dame Prudence, whan sche seih the good wille of hir housbond, sche delibered and took avis by hir-self, thenkynge how sche mighte bringe this neede unto good conclusioun and to a good ende. And whan sche saugh hire tyme, sche sente for these adversaries to come unto hire into a privé place, and schewed wysly unto hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, and the grete harmes and perils that ben in werre; and sayde to hem, in goodly manere, how that hem aughte to have gret repentaunce of the injurie and wrong that thay hadde doon to Melibe hire lord, and unto hire and hire doughter. And whan thay herden the goodly wordes of dame Prudence, they were so surprised and ravyssched, and hadden so gret joye of hire, that wonder was to telle. 'A! lady,' quod thay, 'ye have schewed unto us the blessyng of swetnes, after the sawe of David the prophete; for the recounsilyng, which we be nought worthy to have in no manere, but we oughten require it with gret contricioun and humilité, ye of youre grete goodnes have presented unto us. Now we se wel, that the science of

Salamon is ful trewe: he saith, that swete wordes multiplien and encrescen frendes, and maken schrewes to ben debonaire and meke. Certes,' quod thay, 'we putten oure deede, and al oure matier and cause, al holly in youre good wille, and ben redy to obeye to the speche and to the comaundement of my lord Melibe. And therfore, deere and benigne lady, we praye yow and byseke yow, as meekely as we conne and maye, that it like to yowre grete goodnes to fulfille in deede yowre goodliche wordes. For we considere and knowleche wel that we have offended and greved my lord Melibe out of resoun and out of mesure, so ferforth that we ben nought of power to make his amendes; and therfore we oblige us and bynde us and oure frendes, for to doo al his wille and his comaundementz. But peraventure he hath such hevynes and such wraththe to usward, bycause of oure offence, that he wol enjoyne us such peyne as we mowe not bere ne susteyne; and therfore, noble lady, we biseke to youre wommanly pité to take such avysement in this neede, that we, ne oure frendes, ben not disherited and destroyed thurgh oure folye.' 'Certes,' quod dame Prudence, 'it is an hard thing, and right a perilous that a man put him al outrely in the arbitracioun and juggement and the might and power of his enemyes. For Salamon saith: Leeveth *me* and yiveth credence to that that I schal say: I say, quod he, *ye* poeple, *ye folke*, and *ye* governours of holy chirche, to thy sone, to thi wyf, to thy frend, ne to thy brother, ne yeve thou never might ne maystry of thy body, whil thou lyvest. Now, sith he defendith that a

man schulde not yive to his brother, ne to his frend, the might of his body, by a strenger resoun he defendeth and forbedith a man to yive his body to his enemye. But natheles, I counseile yow that ye mystruste nought my lord; for I wot wel and knowe verraily, that he is debonaire and meke, large, curteys, and no thing desirous ne coveytous of good ne richesse: for ther is no thing in this world that he desireth, save oonly worschipe and honour. Forthermore I knowe, and am right seure, that he wol no thing doo in this neede withoute counsail of me; and I schal so worche in this cause, that by the grace of oure lord God ye schul be recounsiled unto us.' Thanne sayde thay, with oon voys: 'Worschipful lady, we putte us and oure goodes al fully in youre wille and disposicioun, and ben redy to come, what day that it like yow and unto youre noblesse to limite us or assigne us, for to make oure obligacioun and bond, as strong as it liketh to youre goodnes, that we mowe fulfille the wille of yow and of my lord Melibe.' Whan dame Prudence had herd the answeres of thise men, sche bad hem go agayn pryvely, and sche retournede to hir lord Melibe, and tolde him how sche fond his adversaries ful repentant, knowlechinge ful lowely here synnes and trespasses, and how thay were redy to suffre alle peyne, requiring and praying him of mercy and pité.

Thanne saide Melibeus, 'He is wel worthy to have pardoun and foryevenes of his synne, that excusith not his synne, but knowlecheth and repentith him, axinge indulgence. For Senek saith:

Ther is the remissioun and foryevenesse, wher as the confessioun is; for confessioun is neighebor to innocence. And he saith in another place, He that hath schame of his synne, knowlechith it. And therfore I assente and conferme me to have pees, but it is good that we doo it nought withoute assent and the wille of oure frendes.' Thanne was Prudence right glad and jolyf, and sayde: 'Certes, sire,' quod sche, 'ye ben wel and goodly avysed; for right as by the counsail and assent and help of youre frendes, ye have be stired to venge yow and make werre, right so withoute here counseil schul ye nought acorde yow ne have pees with youre adversaries. For the lawe saith: Ther nys no thing so good by way of kinde, as thing to be unbounde by him that it was bounde.' And thanne dame Prudence, withoute delay or taryinge, sente anoon messageres for here kyn and for here olde frendes, whiche that were trewe and wyse; and tolde hem by ordre, in the presence of Melibe, of this matier, as it is above expressed and declared; and praide hem that thay wolde yive here avys and counseil what best were to doon in this matiere. And whan Melibeus frendes hadde take here avys and deliberacioun of the forsayde matier, and hadden examyned it by greet besynes and gret diligence, they yafe him ful counsail to have pees and reste, and that Melibeus schulde with good hert resceyve his adversaries to foryivenes and mercy.

And whan dame Prudence had herd thassent of hir lord Melibeus, and counseil of his frendes acorde with hire wille and hire entencioun, sche

was wonderly glad in herte, and sayde: 'Ther is an *olde* proverbe that saith, the goodnesse that thou maist do this day abyde not ne delaye it nought unto to morwe; and therfore I counseile yow ye sende youre messageres, whiche that ben discrete and wise, unto youre adversaries, tellynge hem on youre bihalve, that if thay wol trete of pees and of accord, that thay schape hem withoute dilay or taryinge to come unto us.' Which thing was parformed in dede; and whan these trespasours and repentynge folk of here folies, that is to sayn, the adversaries of Melibe, hadden herd what the messangeres sayden unto hem, thay were right glad and jolif, and answerden ful mekely and benignely, yeldynge graces and thankinges to here lord Melibe, and to al his compaignye; and schope hem without delay to go with the messangeres, and obeye hem to the comaundement of here lord Melibe. And right anoon thay token here way to the court of Melibe, and token with hem some of here trewe frendes, to make faith for hem, and for to ben here borwes. And whan thay were comen to the presence of Melibeus, he seyde hem thise wordes: 'It stondith thus,' quod Melibeus, 'and soth it is, that ye causeles, and withouten skile and resoun, have doon gret injuries and wronges to me, and to my wyf Prudence, and to my doughter also, for ye have entred into myn hous by violence, and have doon such outrage, that alle men knowe welle that ye have deserved the deth; and therfore wil I knowe and wite of yow, whether ye wol putte the punyschment and the chastisement and the vengeaunce of this outrage,

in the wille of me and of my wyf, dame Prudence, or ye wil not.' Thanne the wisest of hem thre answerde for hem alle, and sayde: 'Sire,' quod he, 'we knowe wel, that we be unworthy to come to the court of so gret a lord and so worthy as ye be, for we han so gretly mystake us, and have offendid and giltid in such a wise ageins youre neighe lordschipe, that trewely we have deserved the deth. But yit for the greete goodnes and debonaireté that al the world witnesseth of youre persone, we submitten us to the *hihe* excellence and benignité of youre gracious lordschipe, and ben redy to obeye to alle youre comaundementz, bisekynge yow that of youre merciable pité ye wol considre oure grete repentaunce and lowe submissioun, and graunte us foryivenes of oure outrage, trespas, and offence. For wel we knowen, that youre liberal grace and mercy strechen forthere into goodnesse than doth oure outrage, gilt, and trespas, into wikkednes; al be it that cursedly and dampnably we have agilt ayeinst youre highe lordschipe.' Thanne Melibe took hem up fro the ground ful benignely, and resceyved here obligaciouns, and here *b*ondes, by here othes upon here plegges and borwes, and assigned hem a certeyn day to retourne unto his court for to accepte and receyve the sentence and juggement that Melibe wolde comaunde to be doon on hem, by these causes aforn sayde; which thing ordeyned, every man retourned home to his hous. And whan that dame Prudence saugh hire tyme, sche freyned and axed hire lord Melibe, what vengeance he thoughte to take upon his adversaries. To which Melibeus

answerd and saide: 'Certes,' quod he, 'I thenke and purpose me fully to disherite hem of al that ever thay have, and for to putte hem in exil for evermore.'

'Certes,' quod dame Prudence, 'this were a cruel sentence, and mochil ayeinst resoun. For ye ben riche y-nough, and have noon neede of other mennes good; and ye mighte lightly gete yow a coveitous name, which is a vicious thing, and oughte to ben eschewed of every man; for after the sawe of thapostil, covetise is roote of alle harmes. And therfore it were bettre for yow to lese so moche good of youre oughne, than for to take of here good in this manere. For bettir it is to lese good with worschipe, than it is to wynne good with vilonye and schame. And every man oughte to do his diligence and his busynesse, to gete him a good name. *And yit shal he not only besy hym in kepynge of his gode name,* but he schulde *also* enforce him alway to do som thing, by which he may renovele his good name; for it is writen, that the olde goode loos of a man is soone *done or* goon and passed, whan it is not newed ne renoveled. And as touchinge that ye sayn, that ye wol exile youre adversaries, that thinketh me mochil ayeinst resoun, and out of mesure; considerith the power that thay han yyve to yow upon here body and on hem-self. And it is writen, that he is worthy to lese his privelege, that mysuseth the might and the power that is yeve to him. And yit I sette the caas, ye mighte enjoyne hem that peyne by right and lawe (which I trowe ye mowe nought do), I say, ye mighte nought putte it to execu-

cioun peraventure, and thanne were it likly to torne to the werre, as it was biforn. And therfore if ye wol that men do yow obeissaunce, ye moste deme more curteisly, that is to sayn, ye moste yive more esyere sentence and juggement. For it is writen: He that most curteysly comaundeth, to him men most obeyen. And therfore I pray yow, that in this necessité and in this neede ye caste yow to overcome youre herte. For Senek saith, he that overcometh his herte, overcometh twyes. And Tullius saith: Ther is no thing so comendable in a gret lord, as whan he is debonaire and meeke, and appesith him lightly. And I pray yow, that ye wol forbere now to do vengeaunce, in such a manere, that youre goode name may be kept and conserved, and that men mowe have cause and matiere to prayse yow of pité and of mercy, and that ye have noon cause to repente yow of thing that ye doon. For Senec saith: He overcometh in an evel manere, that repenteth him of his victorie. Wherfore I pray yow let mercy be in youre herte, to theffect and thentent, and God almighty have mercy and pité upon yow in his laste juggement. For seint Jame saith in his Epistil: juggement withoute mercy schal be doon to him, that hath no mercy upon another wight.'

Whan Melibe had herd the grete skiles and resouns of dame Prudens, and hir wys informacioun and techynge, his herte gan enclyne to the wille of his wyf, consideryng hir trewe entent, conformed him anoon and consented fully to werke after hir reed and counseil, and thankid God, of

whom procedeth al goodnes, that him sente a wif of so gret discrecioun. And whan the day cam that his adversaries schulden appere in his presence, he spak to hem ful goodly, and sayde in this wise: 'Al be it so, that of youre pryde and heigh presumpcioun and folye, and of youre negligence and unconnynge, ye have mysbore yow, and trespassed unto me, yit forasmoche as I se and biholde youre humilité, that ye ben sory and repentaunt of youre giltes, hit constreigneth me to do yow grace and mercy. Wherfore I receyve yow to my grace, and foryeve yow outerly alle the offenses, injuries, and wronges, that ye have don to me and agayns me and myne, *to* this effect and to this ende, that God of his endeles mercy wole at the tyme of oure deyinge foryive us oure giltes, that we have trespased to him in this wrecchid world; for douteles and we ben sory and repentaunt of the synnes and giltes whiche we have trespassed inne in the sight of oure lord God, he is so free and so merciable, that he wil foryive us oure gultes, and bringe us to the blisse that never hath ende.' *Amen.*

THE PROLOGE OF THE MONKES TALE.

HAN ended was my tale of Melibé,
And of Prudence and hire benignité,
Oure Hoste sayde, 'As I am faithful man,
And by the precious corpus Madryan!
I hadde lever than a barel ale
That gode leef my wyf had herd this tale.
For sche is no thing of such pacience
As was this Melibeus wyf dame Prudence.
By Goddes boones! whan I bete my knaves,
Sche bringeth me forth the grete clobbet staves,
And crieth, 'slee the dogges everychon!
And breke of hem bothe bak and bon!'
And if that eny neghebour of myne
Wol nought to my wyf in chirche enclyne,
Or be so hardy to hir to trespace,
Whan sche comth hom, sche rampeth in my face,
And crieth, 'false coward, wreke thy wyf!
By corpus bones! I wil have thy knyf,
And thou schalt have my distaf and go spynne.'
Fro day to night *right* thus sche wil bygynne;
'Allas!' sche saith, 'that ever I was i-schape,
To wedde a mylk-sop or a coward ape,
That wil be over-lad with every wight!
Thou darst nought stonde by thy wyves right.'
This is my lif, but if that I wil fighte;
And out atte dore anoon I moste me dighte,

And ellis I am lost, but-if that I
Be, lik a wilde leoun, fool-hardy.
I wot wel sche wol do me sle som day
Som neighebor, and thanne renne away.
For I am perilous with knyf in honde,
Al be it that I dar not hir withstonde.
For sche is big in armes, by my faith!
That schal he fynde that hire mysdoth or saith.
But let us passe away fro this matiere.
My lord sir monk,' quod he, 'be mery of chere,
For ye schul telle a tale trewely.
Lo, Rowchestre stant heer faste by.
Ryde forth, myn oughne lord, brek nought oure game!
But, by my trouthe, I can not youre name;
Whether schal I calle yow my lord dan Johan,
Or daun Thomas, or elles dan Albon?
Of what hous be ye, by your fader kyn?
I vow to God thou hast a ful fair skyn!
It is a gentil pasture ther thou gost;
Thow art not like a penaunt or a goost.
Upon my faith, thou art an officer,
Som worthy sexteyn, or some celerer;
For, by my fader soule, as to my doom,
Thou art a *maister* whan thou art at hoom,
No pover cloysterer, ne non novys,
But a governour *a* wily and wys;
And therwithal of brawne and of bones
A wel faryng persone for the noones.
I praye God yive him confusioun,
That first the broughte to religioun!
Thow woldist han be a trede-foul aright;
Haddist thou as gret leve as *thou hast* might

To parforme al thi wil in engendrure,
Thow haddist bigeten many a creature.
Allas! why werest thou so wyd a cope?
God yif me sorwe! and I were a pope,
Nought only thou, but every mighty man,
Though he were schore brode upon his pan,
Schuld han a wif; for al this world is lorn;
Religioun hath take up al the corn
Of tredyng, and we burel men ben schrympes;
Of feble trees ther cometh feble ympes.
This makith that oure heires ben so sclendere
And feble, that thay maye not wel engendere.
This makith that our wyfes wol assaye
Religious folk, for thay may bettre paye
Of Venus payementes than maye we.
God woot, no lusscheburghes paye ye!
But beth nought wroth, my lorde, though I playe,
F*ul* oft in game a soth, I have herd saye.'
This worthy Monk took al in pacience,
And saide, 'I wol doon al my diligence,
Als fer as souneth into honesté,
To telle yow a tale, or tuo or thre;
And if yow lust to herken hider-ward,
I wil yow saye the lif of seint Edward,
Or elles first tre*ge*dis wil I yow telle,
Of which I have an hundred in my celle.
Tregedis is to sayn a certeyn storie,
As olde bookes maken us memorie,
Of hem that stood in greet prosperité,
And is *y*-fallen out of heigh degré
Into miserie, and endith wrecchedly;
And thay ben versifyed comunly
Of sixe feet, which men clepe exametron.

In prose ben eek endited many oon;
In metre eek, in *mony a* sondry wise;
Lo, this declaryng ought y-nough suffise.
Now herkneth, if yow likith for to heere;
But first I yow biseche in this matiere,
Though I by ordre telle not thise thinges,
Be it of popes, emperours, or kynges,
After her age, as men may writen fynde,
But telle hem som bifore and som byhynde,
As it cometh now to my remembraunce,
Haveth me excused of myn ignoraunce.

THE MONKES TALE.

IWOL bywaile, in maner of tregedye,
The harm of hem that stood in heigh degre,
And fallen so ther is no remedye
To bring hem out of her adversité;
For certeynly, whan fortune lust to flee,
Ther may no man the cours of hir whiel holde;
Let no man truste in blynd prosperité,
Beth war by these ensamples trewe and olde.

LUCIFER.

At Lucifer, though he an aungil were,
And *noght* a man, at him wil I bygynne;
For though fortune may non aungel dere,
From heigh degre yit fel he for his synne
Doun into helle, wher *as* he yet is inne.

O Lucifer! brightest of aungels alle,
Now art thou Sathanas, thou maist nought twynne
Out of miserie in which thou art falle.

ADAM.

Lo Adam, in the feld of Damassene
With Goddes oughne fynger wrought was he,
And nought bigeten of mannes sperma unclene,
And welt al paradys, savyng oon tre.
Hadde never worldly man suche degre
As Adam, til he for mysgovernance
Was dryven out of heigh prosperité,
To labour, and to helle, and to meschaunce.

SAMPSON.

Lo Sampson, whiche that was annunciate
By thangel, long er his nativité,
And was to God Almighty consecrate,
And stood in nobles whil that he mighte se.
Was never such another as was he,
To speke of strength, and therto hardynesse;
But to his wyfes told he his secré,
Thurgh which he slough himself for wrecchidnesse.

Sampson, this noble and myhty champioun,
Withouten wepen save his hondes tueye,
He slowhe and al to-rente the lyoun
To-ward his weddynge walkinge be the waie.
The false wif couthe him plese and preie
Til sche his counseile knewe, and sche, untrewe,
Unto his foos his counsel gan bewreye,
And him for-soke, and toke another newe.

Thre hundred foxis took Sampson for ire,
And alle her tayles he togider bond;

And sette the foxes tailes alle on fuyre,
For he in every tail hath knyt a brond;
And thay brent alle the cornes of that lond,
And alle her olyvers and vynes eeke.
A thousand men he slough eek with his hond,
And hadde no wepen but an asses cheeke.
Whan thay were slayn, so thursted him that he
Was wel ner lorn, for which he gan to preye
That God wolde of his peyne have som pité,
And send him drynk, and elles most he deye.
And out of this asses cheke, that was so dreye,
Out of a woung-toth sprong anon a welle,
Of which he dronk ynough, schortly to seye;
Thus halp him God, as Judicum can telle.
By verray fors at Algason, on a night,
Maugre the Philistiens of that cité,
The gates of the toun he hath up plight,
And on his bak caried hem hath he,
Heigh upon an hil, wher men might hem se.
O noble almighty Sampson, leef and deere,
Haddest thou nought to wommen told thy secré,
In al the world ne hadde *ther* be thy peere.
This Sampson neyther siser dronk ne wyn,
Ne on his heed com rasour noon ne schere,
By precept of the messager divyn,
For alle his strengthes in his heres were.
And fully twenty wynter, yer by yere,
He hadde of *Israel* the governaunce.
But soone he schal wepe many a teere,
For wymmen schuln him bringe to meschaunce.
Unto his lemman Dalida he tolde
That in his heres al his strengthe lay;
And falsly to his foomon sche him solde,

And slepyng in hir barm upon a day
Sche made to clippe or schere his heres away,
And made his foomen al his craft espien.
And whan thay fonde him in this array,
They bound him fast, and put out bothe his yen.
But er his heer was clipped or i-schave,
Ther was no bond with which men might him bynde;
But now is he in prisoun in a cave,
Ther as thay made him at the querne grynde.
O noble Sampson, strengest of al mankynde!
O whilom jugge in glory and in richesse!
Now maystow wepe with thine eyghen blynde,
Sith thou fro wele art falle *in* wrecchednesse!
Thend of this caytif was, as I schal saye,
His foomen made a fest upon a daye,
And made him as here fool biforn hem playe;
And this was in a temple of gret arraye;
But atte last he made a foul affray.
For he two pilers schook, and made hem falle,
And doun fel temple and al, and ther it lay,
And slough himsilf and eek his fomen alle;
That is to sayn, the princes everichon;
And eek thre thousand bodies were ther slayn
With fallyng of the grete temple of stoon.
Of Sampson now *ne* wil I no more sayn;
Be war by these ensamples, olde and playn,
That no man telle his counseil to his wyf,
Of such thing as he wold have secre fayn,
If that it touche his lymes or his lif.

DE ERCULE.

Of Ercules, the sovereyn conquerour,
Singen his werkes laude and heigh renoun;

For in his tyme of strength he bar the flour.
He slough and rafte the skyn fro the leoun;
He of Centaures layde the bost adoun;
He Arpies slough, the cruel briddes felle;
The gold appul he raft fro the dragoun;
He drof out Cerbures the *hounde* of helle;
He slough the cruel tyrant Buserus,
And made his hors to frete him fleisch and boon;
He slough the verray serpent vene*mous*;
Of A*chi*loyus tuo hornes he raft oon;
He slough Cacus in a cave of stoon;
He slough the geaunt A*nte*us the stronge:
He slough the grisly *bore*, and that anoon;
And bar the he*vene* upon his necke longe.
Was never wight, siththen the world bigan,
That slough so many monstres as dede he;
Thurghout the wide world his name ran.
What for his strengthe and for his *heighe* bounté,
And every roialme went he for to se;
He was so strong, ther might*e* no man him lette.
At bothe the worldes endes, as saith *the* Troph*e*,
In stede of boundes he a piler sette.
A lemman hadde this noble campioun,
That highte Dejanire, freissh as May;
And as these clerkes maken mencioun,
Sche hath him sent a schurte fresch and gay.
Alas! this schirt, allas and wailaway!
Envenymed was *subtily* withalle,
That er he hadde wered it half a day,
It made his fleisch al fro his bones falle.
But natheles som clerkes hir excusen,
By oon that highte Nessus, that *had* it makyd.
Be as be may, I wil nought hir accusyn;

But on his bak he weredé this schirt al nakyd,
Til that his fleisch was for the venym blaked.
And whan he saugh noon other remedye,
In hote colis he hath himself i-raked;
For *with* no venym deyned him to dye.
Thus starf this mighty and worthy Ercules.
Lo! who may truste fortune eny throwe?
For him that folweth al this world of pres,
Er he be war, is oft y-layd ful lowe.
Ful wys is he that can himselven knowe!
Be war, for whan that fortune lust to glose,
Than waytith sche hir man to overthrowe,
By suche way as he wolde lest suppose.

DE REGE NABUGODONOSOR.

The mighty trone, the precious tresor,
The glorious ceptre and real magesté,
That hadde the king Nabugodonosore,
With tonge unnethes may descryved be.
He twyes wan Jerusalem that cité;
The vessel out of the temple he with him ladde;
At Babiloyne was his sovereyn see,
In which his glorie and his delyt he hadde.
The fairest children of the blood roial
Of Israel he dede *do* gelde anoon,
And made ylk of hem to ben his thral;
Amonges othre Daniel was oon,
That was the wisest child of everychoon;
For he the dremes of the king expounedé,
Ther as in Caldeyn was ther clerkes noon
That wiste to what fyn his dremes sounedé.
This proude king let make a statu of gold,
Sixty cubites long and seven in brede,

To which ymage bothe yonge and olde
Comaunded he to love and have in drede,
Or in a fornays ful of flames rede
He schulde be brent that wolde not obeye.
But never wolde assente to that dede
Danyel ne his *yonge* felawes tweye.
This king of kinges proude was *and* elate;
He wende God that sit in mayesté
Ne might him nought bireve of his estate.
But sodeynly he left his dignité,
I-lik a best him semede for to be,
And eet hay as an oxe, and lay ther-oute
In rayn, with wilde bestes walkyd he,
Til certein tyme was i-come aboute.
And lik an eglis fetheres were his heres,
His hondes like a briddes clowes were,
Til God relessed him a certeyn yeres.
And yaf him witte, and thanne with many a tere
He thankede God, and ever he is afere
To doon amys or more to trespace.
And er that tyme he layd was on *his* bere,
He knew wel God was ful of might and grace.

BALTHAZAR.

His sone, which that highte Balthazar,
That huld the regne after his fader day,
He by his fader couthe nought be war,
For proud he was of hert and of array;
And eek an ydolaster was he ay.
His heigh astate assured him in pryde;
But fortune cast him doun, and ther he lay,
And sodeynly his regne gan divide.
A fest he made unto his lordes alle

Upon a tyme, *and* made hem blithe be;
And than his officeres gan he calle,
'Goth, bringeth forth the vessealx,' quod he,
'The which my fader in his prosperité
Out of the temple of Jerusalem byrafte;
And to oure hihe goddis thanke we
Of honours that oure eldres with us lafte!'
His wif, his lordes, and his concubines
Ay dronken, whiles her arriont laste,
Out of this noble vesseals sondry wynes.
And on a wal this king his yhen cast,
And saugh an hond armles, that wroot *ful* faste;
For fere of which he quook and sikede sore.
This hond, that Balthazar so sore agaste,
Wrot, *Mane, techel, phares*, and no more.
In al the lond magicien was *ther* noon
That couthe expounde what this lettre mente.
But Daniel expoundith it anoon,
And sayde, 'King, God to thy fader sente
Glori and honour, regne, tresor, and rente;
And he was proud, and nothing God ne dredde,
And therfor God gret wreche upon him sente,
And him birafte the regne that he hadde.
'He was out cast of mannes compaignye,
With asses was his habitacioun,
And eet *he* hay in wet and eek in drye,
Til that he knew by grace and by resoun
That God of heven had*de* dominacioun
Over every regne and every creature;
And than had*de* God of him compassioun,
And him restorede to his regne and his figure.
'Eke thou that art his sone art proud also,
And knowest al this thing so verrayly,

And art rebel to God and art his fo;
Thou dronke eek of his vessel bodily,
Thy wyf eek and thy wenches sinfully
Dronke of the same vessel sondry wynes;
And heriest false goddes cursedly;
Therfore to the schapen ful gret pyne es.
'This hond was send fro God, that on the wal
Wrot, *Mane, techel, phares,* truste me.
Thy regne is doon, thou weyist nought at al;
Dividid is thy regne, and it schal be
To Meedes and to Perses yeven,' quod he.
And thilke same night, the king was slawe,
And Darius occupied his degré,
Though therto neyther had he right ne lawe.
Lordyngs, ensample her-by maye ye take,
How that in lordschip is no sikernesse;
For whan fortune wil a man forsake,
Sche bereth away his regne and his richesse,
And eek his frendes bothe more and lesse.
And what man hath of frendes the fortune,
Mishap wil make hem enemyes, I gesse;
This proverbe is ful sothe and ful comune.

ZENOBIA.

Cenobia, of Palmire the queene,
As writen Perciens of hir noblesse,
So worthy was in armes and so keene,
That no wight passed hir in hardynesse,
Ne in lynage, ne in other gentilesse.
Of the kinges blood of Pers sche is descendid;
I say not that sche hadde most fairnesse,
But of hir schap sche might not be amendid.
Fro hir childhod I fynde that sche fledde

Office of wommen, and to woode sche wente,
And many a wilde hertes blood sche schedde
With arwes brode that sche to hem sente;
Sche was so swyft, that sche anoon hem hente.
And whan that sche was elder, sche wolde kille
Leouns, lebardes, and beres al to-rente,
And in hir armes weld hem at hir wille.
Sche dorste wilde bestes dennes seke,
And renne in the mounteyns al the night,
And slepe under a bussh; and sche couthe eeke
Wrastille by verray fors and verray might
With eny yong man, were he never so wight.
Ther mighte no thing in hir armes stonde.
She kept hir maydenhed from every wight;
To no man deyned hire *for* to be bonde.
But atte last hir frendes han hir maried
To Odenake, a prince of that citee,
Al were it so that sche him longe taried.
And ye schul understonde how that he
Hadde suche fantasies as hadde sche.
But natheles, whan thay were knyt in fere,
Thay lyved in joye and in felicité;
For ech of hem had other leef and deere.
Save oon thing, sche wolde never assente
By no way that he schulde by hir lye
But oones, for it was hir playn entente
To have a child the world to multiplie;
And also soone as she *that* might aspye
That sche was not with childe yit in dede,
Than wolde sche suffre him doon his fantasie
Eftsones, and nought but oones, out of drede.
And if sche were with child at thilke cast,
No more schuld he playe thilke game,

Til fully fourty dayes were y-past,
Than wolde sche suffre him to do the same.
Al were this Odenake wilde or tame,
He gat no more of hir, for thus sche sayde,
Hit nas but wyves lecchery and schame,
In other caas if that men with hem playde.
Tuo sones by this Odenak hadde sche,
The which sche kept in vertu and lettrure.
But now unto our purpos torne we;
I say, so worschipful a creature,
And wys, *therwith*, and large with mesure,
So penyble in the werre and curteys eeke,
Ne more labour might in werre endure,
Was nowher noon in al this world to seeke.
Hir riche array, if it mighte be told,
As wel in vessel as in hir clothing,
Sche was al clothed in perré and gold;
And eek sche lafte nought for hir huntyng
To have of sondry tonges ful knowing;
Whan sche hadde leyser and mighte therto entende,
To lerne bookes was al hir likyng,
How sche in vertu might hir lif despende.
And schortly of this story for to trete,
So doughty was hir housbond and eek sche,
That thay conquerede many regnes grete
In thorient, with many a fair citee
Appurtienant unto the magesté
Of Rome, and with strong hond hulden hem faste;
Ne never might her fomen doon hem fle
Ay while that Odenakes dayes laste.
Her batails, who-so lust hem for to rede,
Agayn Sapor the king and other mo,
And how that this processe fel in dede,

Why sche conquered, and what title hadde therto,
And after of hir meschief and hir woo,
How that sche was *beseged* and i-take,
Let hem unto my mayster Petrark go,
That writeth of this y-nough, I undertake.
Whan Odenake was deed, sche mightily
The regnes huld, and with hir propre hond
Ayeins hir foos sche faught ful trewely,
That ther nas king ne prince in *al* that lond
That he nas glad if he that grace fond
That sche ne wold upon his lond werraye.
With hir thay made alliaunce by bond,
To ben in peese, and let hir ryde and playe.
The emperour of Rome, Claudius,
Ne him biforn the Romayn Galiene,
Ne dorste never be so corrageous,
Ne noon Ermine, ne Egipciene,
No Surrien, ne noon Arrabiene,
Withinne the feld that durste with hir fighte
Lest that sche wolde hem with her hondes sleen,
Or with hir meyné putten hem to flighte.
In kinges abyt went hir sones tuo,
As heires of her fadres regnes alle;
And Hermanno and Themaleo
Here names were, *as* Parciens hem calle.
But ay fortune hath in hir hony galle;
This mighty queene may no while endure,
Fortune out of hir regne made hir falle
To wrecchednesse and to mysadventure.
Aurilian, whan that the governaunce
Of Rome cam into his hondes twaye,
He schop him of this queen to do vengeaunce;
And with his legiouns he took the waye

Toward Cenoby; and schortly to saye
He made hir flee, and atte last hir hente,
And feterid hir, and eek hir children tweye,
And wan the lond, and home to Rome he wente.
Amonges other thinges that he wan,
Hir chaar, that was with gold wrought and perré,
This grete Romayn, this Aurilian,
Hath with him lad, for that men schulde se;
Bifore this triumphe walkith sche,
And gilte cheynes in hir necke hongynge;
Corouned sche was, as aftir hir degré,
And ful of perré chargid *was* hir clothynge.
Allas! fortune! sche that whilom was
Dredful to kinges and to emperoures,
Now gaureth al the pepul on hir, alas!
And sche that helmyd was in starke stoures,
And wan bi force tounes stronge and toures,
Schal on *hir* heed now were a wyntermyte;
And sche that bar the cepter ful of floures,
Schal bere a distaf hir *coste* for to quyte.

DE PETRO HISPANNIE REGE.

O noble, *O worthi* Petro, glori of Spayne,
Whom fortune held so heigh in mageste,
Wel oughte men thy pitous deth complayne;
Thy bastard brother made the to fle,
And after, at a sege, by subtilté
Thow were bytrayed, and lad to his tent,
Wher as he with his oughne hond slough the,
Succedyng in thy lond and in thy rent.
The feld of snow, with thegle of blak ther-inne,
Caught with the leoun, reed coloured as is the gleede,
He brewede the cursednesse and synne,

The wikked nest *was* werker of this neede.
Nought *Charles Oliver* that ay took heede
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armoryk
Geniloun Oliver, corruptid for *m*ede,
Broughte this worthy king in such a bryk.

DE PETRO CIPRE REGE.

O worthy Petro king of Cipres, also,
That Alisaunder wan by heigh maistrye,
Ful many an hethen wroughtest thou ful wo,
Of which thin oughne lieges had envye;
And for no thing but for thy chivalrie,
Thay in thy bed han slayn the by the morwe.
Thus can fortune the whel governe and gye,
And out of joye bringe men into sorwe.

DE BARNABO COMITE MEDIOLANO.

Of Melayn grete Barnabo Viscount,
God of delyt and *scourge* of Lumbardye,
Why schulde thyn infortune I nought accounte,
Syn in astaat thou clombe were so hye?
Thy brother sone, that was thy double allie,
For he thy nevew was and sone in lawe,
Withinne his prisoun made the to dye;
But why ne how not I that thou were slawe.

DE HUGILINO COMITE PISE.

Of erl Hugilin of Pise the langour
Ther may no tonge telle for pité.
But litel out of Pise stant a tour,
In whiche tour in prisoun put was he;
And with him been his litel children thre,
Theldest skarsly fyf yer was of age;

Allas! fortune! it was gret cruelté
Suche briddes to put in such a cage.
Dampnyd he was to deye in that prisoun,
For Roger, which that bisschop was of Pise,
Had on him maad a fals suggestioun;
Thurgh which the peple gan on him arise,
And putte him in prisoun in such *a*wise
As ye han herd, and mete and drynk he hadde
So smal that wel unnethe it may suffise,
And therwithal it was ful pore and badde.
And on a day bifel that in that hour
Whan that his mete was wont to be *i*-brought,
The gayler schet the dores of that tour.
He herd it wel, but he *ne* saugh it nought,
And in his hert anoon ther fel a thought
That thay for hungir wolde doon him dyen.
'Alas!' quod he, 'allas! that I was wrought!'
Therwith the teeres felle fro his eyen.
His yongest sone, that thre yer was of age,
Unto him sayde, 'Fader, why do ye wepe?
Whan wil the gayler bringen oure potage?
Is ther no morsel bred that ye doon kepe?
I am so hongry that I may not sleepe.
Now wolde God that I mighte slepe ever!
Than schulde not hunger in my wombe crepe.
Ther is no thing save bred that me were lever.'
Thus day by day this child bigan to crie,
Til in his fadres barm adoun he lay,
And sayde, 'Far wel, fader, I moot dye!'
And kist his fader, and dyde the same day.
And whan the woful fader deed it say,
For wo his armes tuo he gan to byte,
And sayde, 'Fortune, alas and waylaway!

Thin false *wiles* al my woo I wyte.'
His childer wende that it for hongir was,
That he his armes gnew, and nought for wo,
And sayden, ' Fader, do nought so, allas!
But rather et the fleisch upon us tuo.
Oure fleisch thou yave us, oure fleisch thou take us fro,
And ete ynough ;' right thus thay to him seyde.
And after that, withinne a day or tuo,
Thay layde hem in his lappe adoun and deyde.
Himself despeired eek for honger starf.
Thus ended is this mighty eorl of Pise ;
For his estate fortune fro him carf.
Of this tregede it ought ynough suffise ;
Who-so will hiere it in *a* lenger wise,
Rede the grete poet of Itaile
That highte Daunte, for he can it devise,
Fro poynt to poynt nought oon word wil he fayle.

DE NERONE.

Although Nero were als vicious
As any fend that lith ful lowe adoun,
Yit *he*, as tellith us Swethoneus,
This wyde world had in subjeccioun,
Bothe est and west, *south* and septemtrioun.
Of rubies, safers, and of perles white,
Were alle his clothes embroudid up and doun ;
For he in gemmis gretly gan delite.
More delyc*at*, more pomp*us* of array,
More proud was never emperour than he.
That ylke cloth that he had*de* wered a day,
After that tyme he nolde it never se,
Nettis of gold thred had he gret plenté,
To fissche in Tyber, whan him lust to pleye.

His willes were as lawe in his degre,
For fortune as his frend wold him obeye.
He Rome brente for his delicacie;
The senatours he slough upon a day,
To here how men wolde wepe and crye;
And slough his brother, and by his suster lay
His modir made he in pitous array,
For hire wombe *let* slytte he, to byholde
Wher he conceyved *was*, so waylaway!
That he so litel of his moodir tolde.
No teer out of his eyen for that sighte
Ne cam; but sayde, a fair womman was sche.
Gret wonder is *how* that he couthe or mighte
Be domesman on hir *dede* beauté.
The wyn to bringen him comaundid he,
And drank anoon, noon other wo he made.
Whan might is torned unto cruelté,
Allas! to deepe wil the venym wade.
In youthe a maister hadde this emperour,
To teche him letterure and curtesye;
For of moralité he was the flour,
As in his tyme, but if the bokes lye.
And whil his maister had of him maistrie,
He made him so connyng and so souple,
That long tyme it was or tyrranye
Or ony vice dorst on him uncouple.
This Seneca, of which that I devyse,
Bycause Nero had of him such drede,
For he fro vices wolde him chastise
Discretly *as* by word, and nought by dede.
'Sir,' wold he sayn, 'an emperour mot neede
Be vertuous and hate tyrannye.'
For which he in a bath made him to bleede

On bothe his armes, til he moste dye.
This Nero hadde eek *of* a custumance
In youthe ayein his maister for to ryse,
Which after-ward he thought a gret grevaunce;
Therfore he made him deye in this wise.
But natheles this Seneca the wise
Ches in *a* bath to deye in this manere,
Rather than to have another *turmentise;*
And thus hath Nero slayn his maister deere.
Now fel it so that fortune lust no lenger
The highe pride of Nero to cherice;
For though he were strong, yit was sche strenger;
Sche thoughte thus, 'By God! I am to nyce,
To set a man that is ful sad of vice
In high degre, and emperour him calle;
By God! out of his sete I wil him trice:
Whan he lest weneth, sonnest schal *he* falle.
The poeple ros on him upon a night
For *his* defaute, and whan he it aspyede,
Out of his dores anoon he hath him dight
Aloone, and ther he wende have ben allyed,
He knokkede fast; and ay the more he criede,
The faster schette thay the doores alle.
Than wist he wel he had himself mysgyed,
And went his way, no lenger durst he calle.
The peple cried, and rumbled up and doun,
That with his eres herd he how thay sayde,
'*W*her is this false traitour, this Neroun?'
For fere almost out of his witte he brayde,
And to his goddes pitously he prayde
For socour, but it mighte nought betyde;
For drede of this him thoughte that he dyde,
And ran into a gardyn hym to hyde.

And in this gardyn fond he cherlis twayc
Sittynge by a fuyr ful greet and reed.
And to these cherles tuo he gan to praye
To sleen him, and to girden of his heed,
That to his body, whan *that* he were deed,
Were no despyt y-doon for his defame.
Himself he slough, he couthe no better reed;
Of which fortune thai lough and hadde game.

DE OLIPHERNO.

Was never capitaigne under a king
That regnes mo put in subjeccioun,
Ne strenger was in feld of alle thing
As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun;
Ne more pompous in heih presumpcioun,
Than Oliphern, which that fortune ay kiste
So licorously, and ladde him up and doun,
Til that his heed was of, er he it wiste.
Nought oonly that the world had of him awe,
For lesyng of riches and liberté,
But he made every man reneye his lawe;
Nabugodonosor was lord, sayde he;
Noon other god *ne* schuld honoured be.
Ayeinst his heste dar no wight trespace,
Save in Betholia, a strong cité,
Wher Eliachim a prest *was* of that place.
But tak keep of that *dethe* of Olipherne:
Amyd his ost he dronke lay on night
Withinne his tente, large as is a berne;
And yit, for al his pomp and al his might,
Judith, a womman, as he lay upright
Slepying, his heed of smot, and fro his tente

Ful prively sche stal from every wight,
And with his heed unto hir toun sche wente.

DE REGE ANTIOCHIE ILLUSTRI.

What needith it of king Antiochius,
To telle his heye *and* real magesté,
His heyhe pride, his werkes venemous?
For such another was ther noon as he.
Redeth which that he was in Machabé,
And redith the proude wordes that he sayde,
And why he fel fro his prosperité,
And in an hil how wrecchidly he deyde.
Fortune him hath enhaunced so in pryde,
That verraily he wend he might *atteygne*
Unto the sterris upon every syde,
And in a balaunce weyen ech mounteyne,
And alle the floodes of the see restreyne.
And Goddes peple had he most in hate;
Hem wold he slee in torment and in peyne,
Wenyng that God ne might his pride abate.
And for that Nichanor and Thimothé
With Jewes were venquist mightily,
Unto the Jewes such an hate had he,
That he bad graithe his chaar *ful* hastily,
And swor, and sayde ful despitously,
Unto Jerusalem he wold eftsoone,
To wreke his ire on it ful cruelly;
But of his purpos he was let ful soone.
God, for his manace, him so sore smoot
With invisible wounde ay incurable,
That in his guttes carf *it* so and bot,
That his peynes were importable.
And certeynly the wreche was resonable;

For many a man*nes guttes* dede he peyne;
But fro his purpos cursed and dampnable,
For al his smert, he nolde him nought restreyne.
But bad anoon apparailen his host,
And sodeynly, er he was of it ware,
God d*æ*un*t*ede al his pride and al his bost
For he so sore fel out of his chare,
That *hurte* his lymes and his skyn to-tare,
So that he nomore might*e* go ne ryde;
But in a chare men aboute him bare
Al for-brosed, bothe bak and syde.
The wreche of God him smot so cruely,
That in his body wicked wormes crept*e*,
And therwithal he stonk so orribly,
That noon of *al* his meyné that him kept*e*,
Whether that he wook or elles slepte,
Ne mighte nought the stynk of him endure.
In this meschief he weyled and eek wepte,
And knew God lord of every creature.
To al his host and to himself also
Ful wlatsom was the stynk *of his* carayne;
No man ne might him bere to ne fro;
And in *his* stynk and *in his* orrible payne
He starf ful wrecchedly in a mountayne.
Thus hath this robbour and this homicide,
That many a man made wepe and playne,
Swich guerdoun *as* that longeth unto pryde.

DE ALEXANDRO MAGNO, PHILIPPI REGIS MACEDONIÆ FILIO.

The story of Alisaunder is so comune,
That every wight that hath discrecioun
Hath herd som-what or al of his fortune;

Thys wyde world as in conclusioun
He wan by strengthe, or for his heigh renoun,
Thay weren glad for pees unto him sende.
The pride of man and bost he layd adoun,
Wher-so he cam, unto the worldes ende.
Comparisoun yit mighte never be maked
Bitwen him and noon other conquerour;
For al this world for drede of him hath quaked.
He was of knyghthod and of fredam flour;
Fortune him made the heir of hir honour;
Save wyn and wymmen, no thing might aswage
His heigh entent in armes and labour,
So was he ful of *leonyne* corage.
What *pris* were it to him, though I yow tolde
Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo
Of kynges, princes, dukes, and eorles bolde,
Which he conquered and brought unto wo?
I say, as fer as men maye ryde or go,
The world was his, what schold I more devyse?
For thouhe I write or tolde yowe evermo
Of his knighthood, it mighte nought suffise.
Twelf yer he regned, as saith Machabé;
Philippes son of Macedon he was,
That first was king *of* Grece that contré.
O worthy gentil Alisaundre, alas!
That ever schulde falle such a caas!
Empoysoned of thin oughne folk thou were;
Thyn *sis* fortune is torned into an aas,
And right for the ne wepte sche never a teere.
Who schal me yive teeres to compleigne
The deth of gentiles and of fraunchise,
That al the worlde had in his demeigne;
And yit him thought it mighte nought suffice,

So ful was his corage of high emprise.
Allas! who schal helpe me to endite
Fals infortune, and poysoun to devyse,
The whiche two *of* al this wo I wyte.

JULIUS CESAR.

By wisedom, manhod, and *by* gret labour,
Fro humble*he*ede to royal magesté
Up roos he, Julius the conquerour,
That wan al thoccident by land and see,
By strengthe of hond or elles by treté,
And unto Rome made hem contributarie
And siththe of Rome themperour was he,
Til that fortune wax his adversarie.
O mighty Cesar, that in Thessalie
Agains Pompe*ius*, fader thin in lawe,
That of the orient had al the chivalrie,
Als fer as that the day bigynne*th* to dawe,
Thorugh thi knighthod thou hast him take and slawe,
Save fewe folk that with Pompeus fledde;
Thurgh which thou puttist al thorient in awe;
Thanke fortune that so wel the spedde.
But now a litel while I wil bywaile
This Pompeus, the noble governour
Of Rome, which that flowe fro this bataile;
Alas! I say, oon of his men, a fals traitour,
His heed of smoot, to wynne hi*m* favour
Of Julius, and him the heed he brought*e*.
Alas! Pompe*us*, of the orient conquerour,
That fortune *un*to such a fyn the brought*e*.
To Rome agayn repaireth Julius,
With his triumphe laurial ful hye.
But on a tyme Brutus *and* Cassius,

That ever had*de* to his estat envye,
Ful prively hath made conspiracie
Agains this Julius in subtil wise;
And cast the place in which he schulde dye
With boydekyns, as I schal yow devyse.
This Julius to the capitoile went*e*,
Upon a day, as he was wont to goon;
And in the capitoil anoon him hent*e*
This false Brutus, and his other foon,
And stiked him with boydekyns anoon
With many a wounde, and thus thay let him lye.
But never gront he at no strook but oon,
Or elles at tuo, but-if the storie lye.
So manly was this Julius of hert*e*,
And so wel loved estatly honesté,
That though his deedly woundes sore smert*e*,
His mantil over his hipes caste he,
For no man schulde seen his priveté.
And as he lay adeyinge in a traunce,
And wiste wel that verrayly deed was he
Of honesté yet had he remembraunce.
Lucan, to the this story I recomende,
And to Swetoun and to Valiri*us* also,
That al the story writen word and ende,
How to these grete conqueroures tuo
Fortune was first frend and siththen fo.
No man trust upon hir favour longe,
But have hir in awayt for evermo,
Witnesse on alle thise conqueroures stronge.

CRESUS.

This riche Cresus, whilom king of Lyde,
Of which Cresus Cirus him sore dradde,

Yet was he caught amyddes al his pride,
And to the fuyr to brenne him men him ladde.
But such a rayn doun fro the heven schadde,
That slough the fuyr and made him to eschape.
But to be war yet grace noon he hadde,
Til fortune on the galwes made him gape.
Whan he was eschaped, he couth nought stente
For to bygynne a newe werre agayn;
He wende wel, for that fortune him sente
Such hap, that he eschaped thurgh the rayn,
That of his foos he mighte not be slayn.
And eek a sweven upon a night he mette,
Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn,
That in vengeaunce he al his herte sette.
Upon a tree he was set, as him thoughte,
Wher Jubiter him wissch bothe bak and side,
And Phebus eek a fair towail him broughte
To drye him with, and therfore wax his pride;
And to his doughter that stood him biside,
Which that he knew in heigh science abounde,
And bad hire telle what it signifyde,
And sche his dreem right thus *be*gan expounde.
'The tree,' quod sche, 'the galwes is to mene,
And Jubiter *betokeneth* snow and rayn,
And Phebus with his towail so clene,
Tho ben the sonne stremes, soth to sayn.
Thow schalt *a*nhangid ben, fader, certayn;
Rayn schal the wasch, and sonne schal the drye.'
Thus warnede sche him ful plat and ek ful playn
His doughter, which that called was Phanie.
And hanged was Cresus this proude king,
His real *trone* might him not availe.
Tregedie *is* noon other maner thing,

Ne can in *sing*ynge crien ne biwaile,
But for that fortune wil alway assayle
With unwar strook the regnes that ben proude;
For whan men trusteth hir, than wil sche faile,
And cover hir brighte face with a clowde.

THE PROLOGE OF THE NONNE PRESTES TALE.

'HO, sire!' quod the Knight, 'no more of this;
That ye han said is right ynough y-wys,
And mochil mor; for litel hevynesse
Is right i-nough for moche folk, I gesse.
I say for me, it is a gret disease,
Wher as men han ben in gret welthe and ease,
To hieren of her sodeyn fal, allas!
And the contraire is joye and gret solas;
As whan a man hath ben in pore estate,
And clymbith up, and wexeth fortunate,
And ther abydeth in prosperité;
Such thing is gladsom, as *it* thinkith me,
And of such thing were goodly for to telle.'
'Ye,' quod our Host, 'by seint Paules belle,
Ye saye right soth; this monk hath clappid lowde;
He spak, how fortune was clipped with a clowde,
I not never what, and als of tregedie
Right now ye herd; and pardy! no remedye
It is for to bywayle or *to* compleyne
That that is doon; and also it is a peyne,
As ye han said, to hiere of hevynesse.
Sire monk, no more of this, so God you blesse;
Your tale anoyeth al this compaignie;

Such tal*kcinge* is nought worth a boterflye,
For therinne is noon disport ne game.
Wherfor, sir monk, da*un* Pieres by your name,
I pray yow hertly, tel us somwhat ellis;
For sicurly, ner gingling of the bellis
That on your bridil hong on every syde,
By heven king, that for us alle dyde,
I schold er this han falle doun for sleep,
Although the slough had*de* never ben so deep;
Than had*de* your tale *al* be told in vayn.
For certeynly, as these clerkes sayn,
Wher as a man may have noon audience,
Nought helpith it to tellen his sentence.
And wel I wot the substance is in me,
If eny thing schal wel reported be.
Sir, say somwhat of huntyng, I yow pray*e*.
'Nay,' quod the Monk, 'I have no lust to play*e*;
Now let another telle, as I have told.'

Then spak our Ost with rude speche and bold,
And said unto the nonnes prest anoon,
'Com ner, thou prest, come ner, thou sir Johan,
Tel us such thing as may our hertes glade;
Be blithe, although thou ryde upon a jade.
What though thin hors be bothe foul and lene?'
If he wil serve the, rek *the* not a bene;
Lok that thin hert be mery evermo.'
'Yis, sire, yis, Hoste,' *quod he*, 'so mot I go,
But I be mery, i-wis I wol be blamed.'
And right anoon he hath his tale *a*tamyd;
And thus he sayd unto us everichoon,
This sweete prest, this goodly man sir Johan.

THE NONNE PREST HIS TALE.

A POORE wydow, somdel stope in age,
Was whilom duellyng in a pore cotage,
Bisyde a grove, stondyng in a dale.
This wydowe, of which I telle yow my tale,
Syn thilke day that sche was last a wif,
In paciens ladde a ful symple lyf.
For litel was hir catel and hir rente;
For housbondry of such as God hir sente,
Sche fond hirself, and eek hir doughtres tuo.
Thre large sowes hadde sche, and no mo,
Thre kyn, and eek a scheep that highte Malle.
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,
In which she eet ful many a sclender meel.
Of poynaunt saws hir needide never a deel.
Noon deynteth morsel passide thorugh hir throte;
Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.
Repleccioun ne made hir never sik;
Attempre dyete was al hir phisik,
And exercise, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hir nothing for to daunce,
The apoplexie ne schente not hir heed;
No wyn ne drank sche, nother whit ne reed;
Hir bord *was* servyd *most* with whit and blak,
Milk and broun bred, in which sche fond no lak,
Saynd bacoun, and som tyme an ey or tweye;
For sche was as it were a maner deye.

A yerd sche had, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dich withoute,
In which she had a cok, hight Chaunteclere,
In al the lond of crowyng was noon his peere.
His vois was merier than the mery orgon,
On masse dayes that in the chirche goon;
Wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge,
Than is a clok, or an abbay orologge.
By nature knew he ech ascensioun
Of equinoxial in thilke toun;
For whan degrees fyftene were ascendid,
Thanne crew he, it mighte not ben amendid.
His comb was redder than the fyne coral,
And batayld, as it were a castel wal.
His bile was blak, and as the geet it schon;
Lik asur were his legges, and his ton;
His nayles whitter than the lily flour,
And lik the burnischt gold was his colour.
This gentil cok had in his governaunce
Seven hennes, for to do al his plesaunce,
Whiche were his sustres and his paramoures,
And wonder lik to him, as of coloures.
Of whiche the fairest hiewed on hir throte,
Was cleped fayre damysel Pertilote.
Curteys sche was, discret, and debonaire,
And companable, and bar hirself ful faire,
Syn thilke day that sche was seven *nyght* old,
That sche hath trewely the hert in hold
Of Chaunteclere loken in every lith;
He loved hir so, that wel him was therwith.
But such a joye was it to here him synge,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,
In swete accord, ' my liefe is faren on londe.'

Fro thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Bestis and briddes cowde speke and synge.
And so byfel, that in a dawenynge,
As Chaunteclere among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in *the* halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecler gan gronen in his throte,
As man that in his dreem is drecched sore.
And whan that Pertelot thus herd him rore,
Sche was agast, and sayde, ‘herte deere,
What eylith yow to grone in this manere?
Ye ben a verray sleper, fy for schame!’
And he answerd and sayde thus, ‘Madame,
I pray yow, that ye take it nought agreef:
By God, me mette I was in such meschief
Right now, that yit myn hert is sore afright.
Now God,’ quod he, ‘my sweven rede aright,
And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette, how that I romed up and doun
Withinne oure yerd, wher as I saugh a beest,
Was lik an hound, and wold have maad arrest
Upon my body, and wold han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yolow and reed;
And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eeres
With blak, unlik the remenaunt of his heres.
His snowt was smal, with glowynge *e*yen tweye;
Yet of his look for fer almost I deye;
This causede me my gronyng douteles.’
‘Away!’ quod sche, ‘fy on yow, herteles!
Allas!’ quod sche, ‘for, by that God above!
Now have ye lost myn hert and al my love;
I can nought love a coward, by my feith.
For certis, what so eny womman seith,

We alle desiren, if it mighte be,
To have housbondes, hardy, riche, and fre,
And secré, and no nygard, ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,
Ne noon avaunter, by that God above!
How dorst ye sayn for schame unto your love,
That any thing mighte make yow afferd?
Have ye no mannes hert, and han a berd?'
Allas! and canne ye ben agast of swevenys?
Nought, God wot, but vanité, in sweven is.
Swevens engendrid ben of replecciouns,
And often of fume, and of complexiouns,
Whan humours ben to abundaunt in a wight.
Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-night,
Cometh of the grete superfluité
Of youre reede *colera*, pardé,
Which causeth folk to dremen in here dremes
Of arwes, and of fuyr with reede beemes,
Of rede bestis, that thai wil him byte,
Of contek, and of whelpis greet and lite;
Right as the humour of malencolie
Causeth, in sleep, ful many a man to crye,
For fere of beres, or of boles blake,
Or elles blake develes wol him take.
Of other humours couthe I telle also,
That wirken many a man in slep ful woo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.
Lo Catoun, which that was so wis a man,
Sayde he nought thus, ne do no force of dremes?
Now, sire,' quod sche, 'whan we fle fro thise beemes,
For Goddis love, as tak som laxatyf;
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I counsel yow the best, I wol not lye,

That bothe of coloure, and of malencolye
Ye purge yowe; and for ye schol nouht tarye,
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
I schal myself tuo herbes techyn yow,
That schal be for your hele, and for youre prow;
And in oure yerd tho herbes schal I fynde,
The whiche han of her propreté by kynde
To purgen yow bynethe, and eek above.
Forget not this, for Goddis oughne love!
Ye ben ful colerik of complexioun.
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynd yow not replet in humours hote;
And if it do, I dar wel lay a grote,
That ye schul have a fever terciane,
Or elles an agu, that may be youre bane.
A day or tuo ye schul have digestives
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatives,
Of lauriol, century, and fumytere,
Or elles of elder bery, that growith there,
Of eatapus, or of gaytres beriis,
Of erbe yve grow*inge* in our yerd, ther mery is;
Pike hem up right as thay growe, and et hem in.
Be mery, housbond, for your fader kyn!
Dredith non dremes; I can saye no more.'
'Madame,' quod he, '*graunt mercy* of your lore.
But natheles, as touching daun Catoun,
That hath of wisdom such a gret renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By God, men may in olde bookes rede
Of many a man, more of auctorité
That ever Catoun was, so mot I the,
That al the revers sayn of his sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,

That dremes ben significaciouns,
As wel of joye, as of tribulaciouns,
That folk enduren in this lif present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preve schewith it in dede.
Oon of the grettest auc*tours* that men rede,
Saith thus, that whilom tway felawes went*e*
On pylgrimage in a ful good entente;
And happed*e* so, thay com*e* into a toun,
Wher as ther was such congregacioun
Of people, and eek so streyt of herbergage,
That thay fond*e* nought as moche as oon cotage,
In which that thay might*e* bothe i-logged be.
Wherfor thay mosten of necessité,
As for that night, depart her compaignye;
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his loggyng as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was loggid in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was logged wel ynough,
As was his adventure, or *his* fortune,
That us governith alle in comune.
And so bifel, that, long er it were day,
This oon met in his bed, ther as he lay,
How that his felaw gan upon him calle,
And sayd, 'allas! for in an oxe stalle
This night I schal be murdrid ther I lye.
Now help me, deere brother, or I dye;
In alle *haste* cum to me,' he sayde.
This man out of his slep for fer abrayde;
But whan that he was waked out of his sleep,
He torned him, and took of this no keep;
Him thought his dreem nas but a vanité.

Thus twies in his sleepe dremed he.
And at the thridde time yet his felawe
Com, as him thought, and sayd, ‘I am now slawe;
Bihold my bloody woundes, deep and wyde!
Arise up erly in the morwe tyde,
And at the west gate of the toun,’ quod he,
‘A cart *ful* of donge there schalt thou see,
In which my body is hyd *ful* prively;
Do thilke cart arresten boldely.
My gold causede my mourdre, soth to sayn.’
And told him every poynt how he was slayn,
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;
For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
To his felawes in he took the way;
And whan that he cam to this oxe stalle,
After his felaw he bigan to calle.
The hostiller answered him anoon,
And sayde, ‘Sire, your felaw is agoon,
Als soone as day he went out of the toun.’
This man gan falle in a suspeccioun,
Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
And forth he goth, no lenger wold he lette,
Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dong cart as it wente to donge lond,
That was arrayed in the same wise
As ye han herd the deede man devise;
And with an hardy hert he gan to crie
Vengeaunce and justice of this felonye.
‘My felaw mordrid is this same night,
And in this carte he lith *gapeinge* upright.
I crye out on the ministres,’ quod he,
‘That schulde kepe and reule this cite;

Harrow! allas! her lith my felaw slayn!'
What schold I more unto this tale sayn?
The peple upstert, and caste the cart to grounde,
And in the myddes of the dong thay founde
The dede man, that mordred was al newe.
O blisful God, thou art ful just and trewe!
Lo, how thow bywreyest mordre alday!
Mordre wil out, certes it is no nay.
Murder is so wlatsom and abhominable
To God, that is so just and resonable,
That he ne wolde nought suffre it hiled be;
Though it abyde a yeer, or tuo, or thre,
Morder wil out, this is my conclusioun.
And right anoon, the mynistres of that toun
Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned,
And eek the hostiller so sore engyned,
That thay biknew her wikkednes anoon,
And were anhonged by the nekke boon.
'Here may men se that dremys ben to drede.
And certes in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this,
(I gabbe nought, so have I joye or bliss),
Tuo men that wolde have passed over see
For certeyn causes into fer contré,
If that the wynd ne hadde ben contrarie,
That made hem in a cité for to tarie,
That stood ful mery upon an haven syde.
But on a day, agayn the even tyde,
The wynd gan chaunge, and blew right as hem lest.
Jolyf and glad they wenten unto rest,
And casten hem ful erly for to sayle;
But to that oon man fel a gret mervayle.
That oon of hem in his slepyng as he lay,

Him met a wonder drem, agayn the day;
Him thought a man stood by his beddes syde,
And him comaundede, that he schuld abyde,
And sayd him thus, ‘ If thou to morwe wende,
Thow schalt be dreynt; my tale is at an ende.’
He wook, and told his felaw what he mette,
And prayede him his viage for to lette;
As for that day, he prayd him to abyde.
His felaw that lay by his beddis syde,
Gan for to lawgh, and scorned him ful fast.
‘ No dreem,’ quod he, ‘ may so myn herte gaste,
That I wil lette for to do my thinges.
I sette not a straw by thy dremynges,
For swevens been but vanitees and japes.
Men dreme al day of owles and of apes,
And eke of many a mase therwithal;
Men dreme of thinges that never *was*, *ne* schal.
But sith I see that thou wilt her abyde,
And thus forslouthe wilfully thy tyde,
God wot it reweth me, and have good day.’
And thus he took his leve, and went his way.
But er he hadde half his cours i-sayled,
Noot I nought why, ne what meschaunce it ayled,
But casuelly the schippes bothom rente,
And schip and man under the watir wente
In sight of other schippes ther byside,
That with him sailed at the same tyde.
‘ And therfore, faire Pertelot so deere,
By such ensamples olde maistow leere
That no man scholde be so recheles
Of dremes, for I say the douteles,
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.
Lo, in the lif of seint Kenelm, I rede,

That was Kenulphus sone, that noble king
Or Mercinrike, how Kenilm mette a thing.
A litil, *or* he was mordred, upon a day
His mordre in his avysioun he say.
His norice him expouned every del
His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him wel
Fro traisoun; but he nas but seven yer old,
And therfore litel tale hath he told
Of eny drem, so holy was his hert.
By God, I hadde lever than my schert,
That ye had*de* rad his legend, as have I.
Dame Pertelot, I say yow trewely,
Macrobius, that writ the avisioun
In Auffrik of the worthy Cipioun,
Affermeth dremes, and saith that thay been
Warnyng of thinges that men after seen.
And forthermore, I pray yow loketh wel
In the olde Testament, of Daniel,
If he huld dremes eny vanyté.
Rede eek of Joseph, and ther schal ye see
Whethir dremes ben som tyme (I say nought alle)
Warnyng of thinges that schul after falle.
Lok of Egipt the king, daun Pharao,
His baker and his botiler also,
Whethir thay felte noon effect in dremis.
Who-so wol seke actes of sondry remys,
May rede of dremes many a *wonder* thing.
Lo Cresus, which that was of Lydes king,
Mette *he nouht* that he sat upon a tre,
Which signified he schuld hanged be?
Lo hir Andromachia, Ectors wif,
That day that Ector schulde lese his lif,
Sche dremed on the same night byforn,

How that the lif of Ector schulde be lorn,
If thilke day he wente *in*-to batayle;
Sche warned him, but it mighte nought availe;
He wente forth to fighte natheles,
And he was slayn anoon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
And eek it is neigh day, I may not duelle.
Schortly I say, as for conclusion,
That I schal have of this avisioun
Adversité; and I say forthermore,
That I ne telle of laxatifs no store,
For thay ben venemous, I wot it wel;
I hem defye, I love hem never a del.
'Now let us speke of mirthe, and lete al this;
Madame Pertilot, so have I blis,
Of o thing God hath me sent large grace;
For whan I see the beauté of your face,
Ye ben so scarlet *reede* about your eyghen,
It makith al my drede for to deyghen,
For, also siker as *In principio*,
Mulier est hominis confusio.
(Madame, the sentence of this Latyn is,
Womman is mannes joye and mannes blis.)
For when I fiele a-night your softe syde,
Al be it that I may not on you ryde,
For that your perche is mad so narrow, allas!
I am so ful of joye and *of* solas,
That I defye both swevene and drem.'
And with that word he fleigh doun fro the beem,
For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he hadde found a corn, lay in the yard.
Real he was, he was nomore aferd;

He fetherid Pertelote twenty tyme,
And trad as ofte, er that it was prime.
He lokith as it were a grim lioun;
And on his toon he rometh up and doun,
Him deyned not to set his foot to grounde.
He chukkith, whan he hath a corn i-founde,
And to him rennen than his wifes alle.
Thus real, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this chaunteclere in his pasture;
And after wol I telle his adventure.
Whan that the moneth in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan God makede first man,
Was complet, and y-passed were also,
Syn March bygan, tway monthes and dayes tuo,
Byfell that Chaunteclere in al his pride,
His seven wyves walkyng by his syde,
Cast up his eyghen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus had i-ronne
Twenty degrees and oon, and somwhat more;
He knew by kynde, and by noon other lore,
That it was prime, and crew with blisful steven.
'The sonne,' he sayde, 'is clomben up on heven
Twenty degrees and oon, and more i-wis.
Madame Pertelot, my worldes blis,
Herknith these blisful briddes how thay synge,
And seth these freissche floures how thay springe;
Ful is myn hert of revel and solaas.'
But sodeinly him fel a sorwful caas;
For ever the latter end of joye is wo.
God wot that worldy joye is soone ago;
And if a rethor couthe faire endite,
He in a chronique saufly might *hit* write,
As for a soverayn notabilite.

Now every wys man let him herkne me;
This story is also trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot the Lake,
That womman huld in ful gret reverence.
Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.
A colefox, ful of sleight *and* iniquité,
That in the grove had*de* woned yeres thre,
By heigh ymaginacioun forncast,
The same nighte thurgh*out* the hegges brast
Into the yerd, ther Chaunteclere the faire
Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;
And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,
Til it was passed undern of the day,
Waytyng his tyme on Chaunteclere to falle;
As gladly doon these homicides alle,
That in awayte ly*ggen* to morthre men.
O false mordrer lurkyng in thy den!
O newe Scariot, newe Genilon!
Fals dissimilour, O Greke Sinon,
That broughtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
O Chauntecler, accursed be the morwe,
That thou into the yerd flough*e* fro the bemys!
Thow were ful wel i-warned by thy dremys,
That thilke day was perilous to the.
But what that God forwot mos*te* needes be,
After the opynyoun of certeyn clerkis.
Witnesse on him, that eny *parfit* clerk is,
That in scole is gret altercacioun
In this matier, and gret desputesoun,
And hath ben of an hundred thousend men.
But yit I can not bult it to the bren,
As can the holy doctor Augustyn,
Or Boece, or the bisshop Bradwardyn,

Whether that Goddis worthy forwetyng
Streigneth me needely for to do a thing,
(Needely clepe I simple necessité);
Or elles if fre choys be graunted me
To do that same thing, or to do it nought,
Though God forwot it, er that it was wrought;
Or of his wityng streyneth never a deel,
But by necessité condicionel.
I wol not have to do of such matiere;
My tale is of a cok, as ye schal hiere,
That took his counseil of his wyf with sorwe,
To walken in the yerd upon the morwe,
That he had*de* met the dreme, that I *yow* tolde.
Wymmens counseiles ben ful ofte colde:
Wommannes counseil brought us first to woo,
And made Adam fro paradys to go,
Ther as he was ful mery, and wel at ease.
But for I not, to *whom* it mighte displease,
If I counseil of womman wolde blame,
Pas over, for I sayd it in my game.
Red auctours, wher thay trete of such matiere,
And what thay sayn of wommen ye may heere.
These been the cokkes wordes, and not myne
I can noon harme of *no* wommen divine.
Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
Lith Pertelot, and alle hir sustres by,
Agayn the sonne; and Chaunteclere so free
Sang merier than the meremayd in the see;
For Phisiologus seith sicurly,
How that thay syngen wel and merily.
And so byfel that as he cast his ye
Among the wortes on a boterflye,
He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.

No thing ne list him thanne for to crowe,
But cryde anon, 'cok, cok,' and up he sterte,
As man that was affrayed in his herte.
For naturelly a beest desireth flee
Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,
Though he never er hadde seyn it with ye.
This Chaunteclere, whan he gan it aspye,
He wold han fled, but that the fox anon
Said, 'Gentil sire, allas! why wol ye goon?
Be ye affrayd of me that am youre frend?
Now certes, I were worse than eny feend,
If I to yow wold harm or vilonye.
I am not come your counsail to espye.
But trewely the cause of my comynge
Was only for to herken how ye singe,
For trewely ye have als mery a steven,
As eny aungel hath, that is in heven;
Therwith ye han of musik more felynge,
Than hadde Boece, or eny that can synge.
My lord your fader (God his soule blesse)
And *eke* youre moder of her gentilesse
Han in myn hous ibeen, to my gret ease;
And certes, sire, ful fayn wold I yow please.
But for men speke of syngyng, I wol saye,
So mot I brouke wel myn yen twaye,
Save ye, I herde never man so synge,
As dede your fadir in the morwenynge.
Certes it was of hert al that he song.
And for to make his vois the more strong,
He wolde so peynen him, that with bothe his yen
He moste wynke, so lowde he wolde crien,
And stonden on his typtoon therwithal,
And streche forth his necke long and smal.

And eek he was of such discressioun,
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
I have wel rad in daun Burnel thasse
Among his verses, how ther was a cok,
That, for a prestes sone yaf him a knok
Upon his leg, whil he was yong and nyce,
He made him for to lese his benefice.
But certeyn ther is no comparisoun
Betwix the wisdom and discressioun
Of youre fader, and of his subtilté.
Now syngeth, sire, for seinte Charité,
Let se, can ye your fader countrefete?'
This Chaunteclere his wynges gan to bete,
As man that couthe his tresoun nought espye,
So was he ravyssht with his flaterie.
  Allas! lordynges, many a fals flatour
Is in your hous, and many a losengour,
That pleasen yow wel more, by my faith,
Than he that sothfastnesse unto yow saith.
Redith Ecclesiast of flaterie;
Beth war, ye lordes, of her treccherie.
  This Chaunteclere stood heighe upon his toos,
Strecching his necke, and held his yhen cloos,
And gan to crowe lowde for the noones;
And daun Russel the fox stert up at oones,
And by the garget hente Chaunteclere,
And on his bak toward the woode him bere.
For yit was there no man that him sewed.
O desteny, that maist not ben eschiewed!
Allas, that Chaunteclere fleigh fro the bemis!
Allas, his wif ne roughte nought of dremis!
And on a Friday fel al this meschaunce.

O Venus, that art goddesse of pleasaunce,
Syn that thy servant was this Chaunteclere,
And in thy service did al his powere,
More for delit, than the world to multiplie,
Why woldest thou suffre him on thy day to dye?
O Gaufred, dere mayster soverayn,
That, whan the worthy king Richard was slayn
With schot, compleynedist his deth so sore,
Why ne had I nought thy sentence and thy lore,
The Friday for to chiden, as dede ye?
(For on a Fryday sothly slayn was he.)
Than wold I schewe *yow* how that I couthe pleyne,
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.
Certis such cry ne lamentacioun
Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun
Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd,
Whan he had hente kyng Priam by the berd,
And slaugh him (as saith us *Eneydos*),
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,
Whan thay hadde seyn of Chauntecler the sighte.
But soveraignly dam Pertelote schrighte,
Ful lowder than did Hasdrubaldes wyf,
Whan that hir housebond hadde lost his lyf,
And that the Romayns had i-brent Cartage,
Sche was so ful of torment and of rage,
That wilfully unto the fuyr sche sterte,
And brend hirselven with a stedfast herte.
O woful hennes, right so cride ye,
As, whan that Nero brente the cité
Of Rome, criden the senatoures wyves,
For that her housbondes losten alle here lyves;
Withouten gult this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now wol I torne to my matier agayn.

The sely wydow, and hir doughtres tuo,
Herden these hennys crie and maken wo,
And out at dores starte thay anoon,
And sawen the fox toward the *grove* goon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
They criden, 'Out! harrow and wayleway!
Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him thay ran*ne*,
And cek with staves many another man*ne;*
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Garlond,
And Malkyn, with a distaf in hir hond;
Ran cow and calf, and cek the verray hogges
So*re* fered were for berkyng of dogges,
And schowtyng of the men and wymmen eke,
Thay ronne that thay thought her herte breke.
Thay yelleden as fe*en*des doon in helle;
The dokes criden as men wold hem quelle;
The gees for fere flowen over the trees;
Out of the hyves cam the swarm of bees;
So hidous was the noyse, a *benedicite!*
Certes *he* Jakke Straw, and his meyné,
Ne maden schoutes never half so schrille,
Whan that thay wolden eny Flemyng kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras thay brough*ten* hornes and of box,
Of horn and boon, in which thay blew and powpede,
And therwithal thay schryked and thay howpede:
It semed *tho* as that heven schulde falle.

Now, goode men, I pray *yow* herkneth alle;
Lo, how fortune torneth sodeinly
The hope and pride eek of her enemy!
This cok that lay upon this foxes bak,
In al his drede, unto the fox he spak,
And saide, 'Sire, if that I were as ye,

Yet schuld I sayn (as wisly God helpe me),
Turneth ayein, ye proude cherles alle!
A verray pestilens upon yow falle!
Now am I come unto this woodes syde,
Maugre youre hede, the cok schal heer abyde;
I wol him ete in faith, and that anoon.'
The fox answerd, 'In faith, it schal be doon.'
And whil he spak that word, al sodeinly
This cok brak from his mouth delyverly,
And heigh upon a tree he fleigh anoon.
And whan the fox seigh that he was i-goon,
'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chaunteclere, allas?
'I have to yow,' quod he, 'y-don trespas,
Inasmoche as I makid yow aferd,
Whan I yow hent, and brought out of the yerd;
But, sire, I dede it *nought* in no wickid entente;
Com doun, and I schal telle yow what I mente.
I schal say soth to yow, God help me so.'
'Nay than,' quod he, 'I schrew us bothe tuo.
And first I schrew myself, bothe blood and boones,
If thou bigile me any ofter than oones.
Thou schalt no more, thurgh thy flaterye,
Do me to synge and wynke with myn ye.
For he that wynkith, whan he scholde see,
Al wilfully, God let him never the!'
'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but God yive him meschaunce,
That is so undiscret of governaunce,
That jangleth, when he scholde holde his pees.'
Lo, such it is for to be recheles,
And necligent, and trust on flaterie.
But ye that holde this tale a folye,
As of a fox, or of a cok or of an hen,
Takith the moralité therof, goode men.

For seint Poul saith, that al that writen is,
To oure doctrine it is i-write i-wys.
Takith the fruyt, and let the chaf be stille.
Now, goode God, if that it be thy wille,
As saith my lord, so make us alle goode men;
And bring us alle to his *highe* blisse. *Amen.*

THE PROLOGE OF THE MAUNCIPLES TALE.

WOT ye not wher ther stont a litel toun,
Which that icleped is Bob-up-an-doun,
Under the Ble, in Canterbury waye?
Ther gan our Hoste for to jape and playe,
And sayde, 'Sires, what? Dun is in the myre!
Is ther no man for prayer ne for hyre,
That wol awake our felawe al byhynde?
A theef *him* mighte ful lightly robbe and bynde.
Se how he nappith, se, for Goddes boones!
That he wol falle fro his hors at ones.
Is that a cook of Londoune, with meschaunce?
Do him come forth, he knoweth his penaunce;
For he schal telle a tale, by my fay,
Although it be nought worth a botel hay.
Awake, thou cook, sit up, God yif the sorwe!
What eyleth the, to slepe by the morwe?
Hast thou had fleen al night, or artow dronke?
Or hastow with some quen al night i-swonke,
So that thou maist not holden up thyn heed?'
This Cook, that was ful pale and nothing reed,
Sayd to our Host, So God my soule blesse,
As ther is falle on me such hevynesse,
Not I nought why, that me were lever slepe,
Than the beste galoun wyn that is in Chepe.'

'Wel,' quod the Maunciple, 'if *it* may doon ease
To the, sir cook, and to no wight displease,
Which that her rydeth in this compaignye,
And *that* our host wolde of his curteisie,
I wol as now excuse the of thy tale;
For in good faith thi visage is ful pale.
Thyn eyen daswen eek, also me thinkith,
And wel I woot, thy breth ful foule stynkith,
That scheweth eek thou art nought wel disposid;
Of me certeyn thou schalt nought ben i-glosed.
Se how he ganith, lo! this dronken wight!
As though he wolde us swolwe anoon right.
Hold clos thy mouth, man, by thy fader kynne!
The devel of helle sette his foot therinne!
Thy cursed breth enfecte wil us alle.
Fy, stynkyng swyne! foule mot the falle!
A! takith heed, sires, of this lusty man.
Now, swete sir, wol ye joust atte fan?
Therto, me thinkith, ye beth right wel i-schape,
I trowe that ye han dronken wyn of ape,
And that *is* whan men playen with a straw.'
And with his speche the Cook wax *wrothe* and wraw,
And on the Maunciple gan nodde he faste
For lak of speche; and doun the hors him caste,
Wher as he lay, til that men him up took.
This was a fair chivaché of a cook!
Allas! that he nad hold him by his ladil!
And er that he agayn were in his sadil,
Ther was gret schowvyng bothe to and fro
To lift him up, and mochel care and wo,
So unwelde was this sory pallid gost.

And to the Maunciple thanne spak oure Host:
'Bycause *that* drink hath dominacioun
Upon this man, by my salvacioun
I trow he lewedly tel wol his tale.
For were it wyn, or old moysty ale,
That he hath dronk, he spekith in his nose,
And snesith fast, and eek he hath the pose.
He *hath* also to do more than ynough
To kepe him and his capil out of the slough
And if he falle fro his capil eftsone,
Than schal we alle have ynough to doone
In liftyng up his hevy dronken cors.
Tel on thy tale, of him make I no fors.
But yit, Maunciple, in faith thou art to nyce,
Thus openly reproeve him of his vice;
Another day he wil, *par adventure*,
Reclayme the, and bringe the to lure;
I mene, he speke wol of smale thinges,
As for to pynchyn at thy rekenynges,
That were not honest, if it cam to pref.'
Quod the Maunciple, 'That were a gret meschief;
So might he lightly bringe me in the snare
Yit had I lever payen for the mare
Which he ryt on, than he schulde with me stryve.
I wil not wrath him, also mot I thrive!
That *tha*t I spak, I sayd it in my bourde.
And wite ye what? I have heer in a gourde
A draught of wyn, ye of a ripe grape,
And right anoon ye schal se a good jape.
This cook schal drinke therof, if I may;
Up peyn of deth he wol nought saye me nay.'
And certeinly, to tellen as it was,
Of this vessel the cook dronk fast, (allas!

What needith it? he drank ynough biforn);
And whan he hadde pouped in his horn,
To the Maunciple he took the gourd agayn.
And of that draught the Cook was wonder fayn,
And thanked him in such wise as he couthe.
Than gan our Host to laughe wonder louthe,
And sayd, 'I se wel it is necessarie
Wher that we go good drynk with us to carie;
For that wol torne rancour and desese
To accord and love, and many *a wronge* appese,
O thou Bacus, i-blessid be thin name,
That so canst tornen ernest into game!
Worschip and thonke be to thy deite!
Of that matier ye get no more of me.
Tel on thi tale, Mauncipel, I the pray.'
'Wel, sir,' quod he, 'now herkyn what I say.'

THE MAUNCIPLES TALE.

WHAN Phebus duelt her in this erthe adoun,
As olde bookes maken mencioun,
He was the moste lusty bachiler
Of al this world, and eek the best archer.
He slough Phiton the serpent, as he lay
Slepyng agayn the sonne upon a day;
And many another noble worthy dede
He with his bowe wrought, as men may rede.
Pleyen he couthe on every mynstralcye,
And syngen, that it was a melodye

To heren of his clere vois the soun.
Certes the kyng of Thebes, Amphioun,
That with his singyng wallide that citee,
Couthe never synge half so wel as he.
Therto he was the semlieste man,
That is or was, siththen the world bigan.
What nedith it his *fetures* to descrive?
For in this worlde, is noon *so faire* on lyve.
He was therwith fulfild of gentilesce,
Of honour, and of parfyt worthinesse.

This Phebus, that was flour of bachilerie,
As wel in fredom, as in chivalrie,
For *his* disport, in signe *eke* of victorie
Of Phiton, so as telleth us the storie,
Was wont to beren in his hond a bowe.
Now hadde this Phebus in his hous a crowe,
Which in a cage he fostred many a day,
And taught it speken, as men doon a jay.
Whit was this crowe, as is a snow-whyt swan,
And countrefete the speche of every man
He couthe, whan he schulde telle a tale.
Ther is withinne this world no nightingale
Ne couthe by an hundred thousend del
Singe so wonder merily and wel.
Now hadde this Phebus in his hous a wyf,
Which that he lovede more than his lif,
And night and day did evermor diligence
Hir for to please, and doon hir reverence;
Sauf oonly, if the soth that I schal sayn,
Jalous he was, and wold have kept hir fayn,
For him were loth bijaped for to be;
And so is every wight in such degré;
But al for nought, for it availeth nought.

A good wyf, that is clene of werk and thought,
Schulde not be kept in noon awayt, certayn;
And trewely the labour is in vayn
To kepe a schrewe, for it wil nought be
This hold I for a verray nyceté,
To spille labour for to kepe wyves;
Thus olde clerkes writen in her lyves.

But now to purpos, as I first bigan.
This worthi Phebus doth al that he can
To pleasen hir, wenyng by such plesaunce,
And for his manhod and his governaunce,
That no man schuld han put him fro hir grace.
But, God it woot, ther may no man embrace
As to destreyne a thing, the which nature
Hath naturelly set in a creature.
Tak any brid, and put him in a cage,
And do al thin entent, and thy corrage,
To foster it tenderly with mete and drynke,
And with alle the deyntees thou canst bethinke,
And keep it al so kyndly as thou may;
Although his cage of gold be never so gay,
Yit hath this brid, by twenty thousand fold.
Lever in a forest, *that is* wyld and cold,
Gon ete wormes, and such wrecchidnes,
For ever this brid wil doon his busynes
To scape out of his cage whan *that* he may;
His liberté the brid desireth aye.
Let take a cat, and foster him wel with mylk
And tender fleisch, and mak his bed of silk,
And let him see a mous go by the wal,
Anoon he wayveth mylk and fleisch, and al,
And every deynté which is in that hous,
Such appetit hath he to ete the mous.

Lo, heer hath kynd his dominacioun,
And appetit flemeth discrescioun.
Also a sche wolf hath a vilayns kynde;
The lewideste wolf that sche may fynde,
Or lest of reputacioun, him wol sche take
In tyme whan hir lust to have a make.
Alle this ensamples tel I by this men
That ben untrewe, and nothing by wommen.
For men han ever a licorous appetit
On lower thing to parforme her delit
Than on her wyves, ben thay never so faire,
Ne never so trewe, ne so debonaire.
Flesssch is so newfangil, with meschaunce,
That we can in no thinge have plesaunce
That souneth into vertu eny while.
This Phebus, which that thought upon no gile,
Deceyved was for al his jolité;
For under him another hadde sche,
A man of litil reputacioun,
Nought worth to Phebus in comparisoun.
Mor harm it is; it happeth ofte so;
Of which ther cometh bothe harm and woo.
And so bifel, whan Phebus was absent,
His wif anoon hath for hir lemman sent.
Her lemman? certes, this is a knavisch speche;
Forgiveth it me, and that I yow biseche.
The wise Plato saith, as ye may rede,
The word mot neede accorde with the dede,
If men schal telle propurly a thing,
The word mot corde with the thing werkyng.
I am a boystous man, right thus say I;
There is no difference trewely
Bytwix a wyf that is of heigh degre,

(If, of hir body dishonest sche be)
And a *povere*re wenche, other then this,
(If so be thay werke bothe amys)
But *that* the gentil in estat above
Sche schal be cleped his lady as in love;
And, for that other is a pore womman,
Sche schal be cleped his wenche and his lemman;
And, God it wot, my goode lieve brother,
Men layn that oon as lowe as *lyth* that other.
Right so betwixe a *tit*eles tiraunt
And an outlawe, or a thef erraunt,
The same I say, there is no difference,
(To Alisaunder told was this sentence)
But, for the tiraunt is of greter might
By force of meyné for to sle doun right,
And brenne hous and home, and make al playn,
Lo, therfor is he cleped a capitayn;
And, for an outlawe hath no smal meyné,
And may not doon so gret an harm as he,
Ne bringe a contre to so gret meschief,
Men clepen him an outlawe or a theef.
But, for I am a man not texted wel,
I wil not telle of textes never a del;
I wol go to my tale, as I bigan.

Whan Phebus wyf had*de* sent for hir lemman,
Anon thay wroughten al her wil volage.
This white crow, that heng alway in cage,
Bihild her werk, and sayde never a word.
And whan that hom was come Phebus the lord,
This crowe song, 'Cuckow, cuckow, cuckow!'
'What? brid,' quod Phebus, 'what song syngistow?
Ne were thou wont so merily to synge,
That to myn hert it was a rejoysynge

To here thi vois? allas! what song is this?'
'By God,' quod he, 'I synge not amys.
Phebus,' quod he, 'for al thy worthynes,
For al thy beauté and thy gentiles,
For alle thy songes, and thy menstralcie,
For al thy waytyng, blered is thin ye,
With oon of litel reputacioun,
Nought worth to the as in comparisoun
The mountauns of a gnat, so mot I thrive;
For on thy bed thy wif I saugh him swyve.'
What wol ye more? the crowe anoon him tolde,
By sadde toknes, and by wordes bolde,
How that his wyf had*de* doon hir leccherie,
Him to gret schame, and to gret vilonye;
And told him oft he saugh it with his yen.
This Phebus gan away-ward for to wryen;
Him thought his sorwful herte brast on tuo.
His bowe he bent, and sette therin a flo;
And in his ire he hath his wif i-slain;
This is theffect, ther is no more to sayn.
For sorw of which he brak his menstralcye,
Bothe harp *and lute*, gitern, and sauterie;
And eek he brak his arwes, and his bowe;
And after that thus spak he to the crowe;
'Traytour,' quod he, 'with tunge of scorpioun,
Thow hast me brought to my confusioun;
Allas that I was born! why nere I deed?
O dere wyf, O gemme of lustyhed,
That were to me so sad, and eek so trewe,
Now liest thou deed, with face pale of hewe,
Ful gulteles, that dorst I swere i-wis.
O racle hond, to do so foule amys.
O trouble wit, O ire recheles,

That unavysed smytest gulteles.
O wantrust, ful of fals suspeccioun,
Wher was thy wit and thy discrecioun?
O, every man be war of raclenesse,
Ne trowe no thing withoute gret witnesse.
Smyt nought to soone, er that thou wite why,
And be avysed wel and sobrely,
Er ye doon eny execucioun
Upon your ire for suspeccioun.
Allas! a thousand folk hath racle ire
Fordoon, or Dun hath brought hem in the myre.
Allas! for sorw I wil myselven sle.'
And to the crowe, 'O false theef,' sayd he,
'I wyl the quyt anoon thy false tale.
Thow songe whilom as any nightyngale,
Now schaltow, false thef, thy song forgoon,
And eek thy white fetheres, everichoon,
Ne never in al thy lyf ne schaltow speke;
Thus schal men on a fals theef ben awreke.
Thou and thin ofspring ever schuln be blake,
Ne never sweete noyse schul ye make,
But ever crye agayn tempest and rayn,
In tokenyng that thurgh the my wyf was slayn.'
And to the crowe he stert, and that anoon,
And puld his white fetheres everychoon,
And made him blak, and raft him al his song,
And eek his speche, and out at dore him slong
Unto the devel, which I him bytake;
And for this cause ben alle crowes blake.
Lordyngs, by this ensample, I yow praye,
Beth war, and taketh kepe what *that* ye saye;
Ne tellith never man in al youre lif,
How that another man hath dight his wyf;

He wol you hatin mortelly certeyn.
Daun Salamon, as wise clerkes seyn,
Techeth a man to kepe his tonge wel.
But, as I sayd, I am nought tixted wel;
But natheles thus taughte me my dame;
'My sone, thenk on the crowe, in Goddes name.
My son, keep wel thy tonge, and kep thy frend;
A wicked tonge is worse than *is* a feend;
My sone, fro a feend men may hem blesse.
My sone, God of his endeles goodnesse
Wallid a tonge with teeth, and lippes eek,
For man schal him avyse what he speek.
My sone, ful ofte for to mochil speche
Hath many a man be spilt, as clerkes teche;
But for a litil speche avisily
Is no man schent, to speke generally.
My sone, thy tonge scholdest thou restreigne
At alle tyme, but whan thou dost thy peyne
To speke of God in honour and prayere.
The firste vertue, sone, if thou wilt lere,
Is to restreigne and kepe wel thy tonge;
Thus lerne *children*, whan that thay ben yonge.
My sone, of mochil speking evel avised,
Ther lasse speking had ynough suffised,
Cometh mochil harm; thus was me told and taught;
In mochel speche synne wantith nought.
Wost *thou* wherof a racle tonge serveth?
Right as a swerd for-kutteth and *for*-kerveth
An arm atuo, my dere sone, right so
A tonge cutteth frendschip al atuo.
A jangler is to God abhominable.
Red Salamon, so wys and honurable.
Red David in his Psalmes, reed Senek.

My sone, spek not, but with thy heed thou bek,
Dissimul as thou were deef, if that thou heere
A jangler speke of perilous mateere.
The Flemyng saith, and lere it if the lest,
That litil jangling causeth mochil rest.
My sone, if thou no wikked word hast sayd,
The thar not drede for to be bywrayd;
But he that hath myssayd, I dar wel sayn,
He may by no way clepe his word agayn.
Thing that is sayd is sayd, and forth it goth,
Though him repent, or be him never so loth,
He is his thral, to whom that he hath sayd
A tale, of which he is now yvel apayd.
My sone, be war, and be noon auctour newe
Of tydyngs, whether thay ben fals or trewe;
Wher-so thou comest, amonges heih or lowe,
Kep wel thy tonge, and thenk upon the crowe.

THE PROLOGE OF THE PERSONES TALE.

BY that the Maunciple had his tale endid,
The sonne fro the south line is descendid
So lowe, that it nas nought to my sight
Degrees nyne and twenty as in hight.
Foure on the clokke it was, *so* as I gesse,
For enleven foote, or litil more or lesse,
My schadow was at thilke tyme of the yere,
Of whiche feet as my lengthe parted were
In sixe feet equal of proporcioun.
Therwith the mones exaltacioun,
In mena Libra, alway gan ascende,
As we were entryng at a townes ende.
For which our Host, as he was wont to gye,
As in this caas, our joly compaignye,
Sayd in this wise: 'Lordyngs, everichoon,
Now lakketh us no tales moo than oon,
Fulfilled is my sentens and my decré;
I trowe that we han herd of ech degré.
Almost fulfilled is myn ordynaunce;
I pray to God so yeve him right good chaunce,
That tellith to us his tale lustily.
Sire prest,' quod he, 'artow a vicory?
Or artow a persoun? say soth, by thy fay.
Be what thou be, *ne* breke *thou* nought oure play;
For every man, save thou, hath told his tale.
Unbocle, and schew us what is in thy male,

For trewely me thinketh by thy chier,
Thou scholdist wel knyt up a gret matier.
Tel us a *fable* anoon, for cokkes boones!'
This Persoun him answerde al at oones:
'Thow getist fable noon i-told for me,
For Poul, that write*th* unto Timothé,
Repreveth hem that weyveth sothfastnesse,
And tellen fables, and such wrecchednesse.
Why schuld I sowen draf out of my fest,
Whan I may sowe whete, if that me lest?
For which I say, if that yow lust to hiere
Moralité and vertuous matiere,
And thanne that ye wil yive me audience,
I wol ful fayn at Cristis reverence
Do yow plesaunce leful, as I can.
But trusteth wel, I am a suthern man,
I can not geste, run, ra*m*, ruf, by letter,
Ne, God wot, rym hold I but litel better.
And therfor, if yow lust, I wol not glose,
I wol yow telle a mery tale in prose,
To knyt up al this fest, and make an ende;
And Jhesu for his grace wit me sende
To schewe yow the way, in this viage,
Of thilke parfyt glorious pilgrimage
That hatte Jerusalem celestial.
And if ye vouchesauf, anoon I schal
Bygynne my tale, for which I yow praye
Telle your avis, I can no better saye.
But natheles this meditacioun
I put it ay under correccioun
Of clerkes, for I am not textuel;
I take but the sentens, trustith wel.
Therfor I make protestacioun,

That I wol stonde to correccioun.'
Upon this word we han assented soone.
For, as it semed, it was for to done,
To enden in som vertuous sentence,
And for to yeve him space and audience;
And bad oure Host he schulde to him sayé,
That alle we to telle his tale him prayé.
Our Host hadde the wordes for us alle;
'Sir prest,' quod he, 'now faire yow bifalle;
Say what yow lust, and we wile gladly hiere.'
And with that word he said in this manere;
'Telleth,' quod he, 'your meditacioun;
But hasteth yow, the sonne wol adoun.
Beth fructuous, and that in litel space,
And to do wel God sende yow *his* grace.'

THE PERSONES TALE.

Jer. 6°. *State super vias, et videte et interrogate de semitis antiquis quæ sit via bona, et ambulate in eâ, et invenietis refrigerium animabus vestris, etc.*

OWRE swete Lord God of heven, that no man wil perische, but wol that we comen alle to the knowleche of him, and to the blisful lif that is perdurable, ammonestith us by the prophet Jeremye, that saith in this wise: Stondeth upon the weyes, and seeth and axeth of olde pathes, that is to sayn, of

old sentence, which is the goode way, *and walketh in that weie*, and ye schul fynde refresshyng for youre soules, etc. Many ben the wayes espirituels that leden folk to oure Lord Jhesu Christ, and to the regne of glorie; of whiche weyes, ther is a ful noble way, and ful covenable, which may not faile to man ne to womman, that thorugh synne hath mysgon fro the righte way of Jerusalem celestial; and this wey is cleped penitence. Of which men schulden gladly herken and enquere with al here herte, to wyte what is penitence, and whens it is cleped penitence, and in what maner, and in how many maneres been the acciones or workynges of penaunce, and how many spieces ben of penitences, and whiche thinges apperteynen and byhoven to penitence, and whiche thinges destourben penitence.

Seint Ambrose saith, that penitence is the pleynyng of man for the gult that he hath doon, and no more to do ony thing for which him oughte to pleigne. And som doctour saith, penitence is the waymentynge of man that sorweth for his synne, and peyneth himself for he hath mysdoon. Penitence, with certeyn circumstaunces, is verray repentaunce of man, that holt himself in sorwe and in woo for his giltes; and for he schal be verray penitent, he schal first bywaile the synnes that he hath do, and stedfastly purposen in his hert to haven schrifte of mouth, and to doon satisfaccioun, and never to do thing for which him oughte more to bywayle or to complayne, and to continue in goode werkes, or elles his repentaunce may nought avayle. For, as saith

scint Isidre, he is a japere and a gabbere, and no verray repentaunt, that eftsoone doth thing for which him oughte to repente. Wepynge, and nought for to stynte to doon synne, may nought avayle. But natheles, men schal hope that at every tyme that man fallith, be it never so ofte, that he may arise thorugh penitence, if he have grace; but certeyn it is a gret doute. For as saith seint Gregory, unnethe arist he out of his synne that is charged with the charge of yvel usage. And therfore repentaunt folk that stinte for to synne, and forlete synne er that synne forlete hem, holy chirche holt hem siker of her savacioun. And he that synneth, and verraily repentith him in his last ende, holy chirche yit hopeth his savacioun, by the grete mercy of oure Lord Jhesu Crist, for his repentaunce; but take ye the siker way.

And now sith that I have declared yow, what thing is penitence, now schul ye understonde, that ther ben thre acciouns of penitence. The first is, that if a man be baptized after that he hath synned. Seint Augustyn saith but-if he be penitent for his olde synful lif, he may not bygynne the newe clene lif. For certes, if he be baptized withoute penitence of his olde gilt, he receyveth the mark of baptisme, but nought the grace, ne the remissioun of his synnes, til he have repentaunce verray. Another defaute is this, that men doon deedly synne after that thay have receyved baptisme. The thridde defaute is, that men fallen into venial synne after here baptisme fro day to day. Therof saith seint Austyn, that

penitence of goode men, and of humble folk, is the penitens of every day.

The spices of penitence ben thre. That oon of hem is solempne, another is comune, and the thridde is pryvé. Thilke penaunce that is solempne, is in tuo maners; as is to be put out of holy chirche in lente, for slaughtre of childre, and such maner thing. Another is, whan a man hath synned openly, of which synne the fame is openly spoken in the contré; and thanne holy chirche by juggement streyneth him to doon open penaunce. Comune penaunce is, that prestes enjoynen men comunly in certeyn caas, as for to goon, peradventure, naked in pilgrimage, or barfot. Privé penaunce is thilk that men doon alday for privé synnes, of whiche we schryve us prively, and receyven privé penaunce.

Now schalt thou understonde what bihoveth and is necessarie to verray parfyt penitence; and this stondith in thre thinges, contricioun of hert, confessioun of mouth, and satisfaccioun. For whiche saith seint Johan Crisostom, penitence distreyneth a man to accepte benignely every peyne that him is enjoyned with contricioun of herte, and schrift of mouth, with satisfaccioun, and in werking of alle maner humbleté. And this is fruytful penitence agayn *tho* thre thinges, in which we wraththe oure Lord Jhesu Crist; this is to sayn, by delit in thinking, by rechelesnes in speking, *and* by wicked synful werkyng. Again these thre wickid gultes is penitence, that may be likned unto a tre.

The roote of this tre is contricioun, that hydith

him in the hert of him that is verray repentaunt, right as the roote of a tree hidith him in the corthe. Of the roote of contricioun springeth a stalk, that bereth braunches and leeves of confessioun and fruyt of satisfaccioun. For whiche Crist saith in his Gospel, doth digne fruyt of penitence, for by this fruyt may men knowe this tree, and nought by the roote that is hyd in the hert of a man, ne by the braunches ne the levys of confessioun. And therfore oure Lord Jhesu Christ saith thus, by the fruyt of hem schul ye knowe hem. Of this roote eek springeth a seed of grace, the which seed is mooder of sikurnes, and this seed is egre and hoote. The grace of this seed springeth of God, thorugh remembraunce of the day of doom, and of the peynes of helle. Of this matier saith Salomon, that in the drede of God man forleteth his synne. The hete of this seed is the love of God and the desiring of the joye perdurable. This hete draweth the hert of man to God, and doth him hate his synne. For sothe, ther is nothing that serveth so wel to a child, as the mylk of his norice, ne nothing is to him more abhominable than the milk whan it is melled *with othere* mete. Right so the synful man that loveth his synne, him semeth it is to him most swete of eny thing; but fro that tyme that he loveth sadly oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and desireth the lif perdurable, ther nys to him nothing more abhominable. For sothly the lawe of God is the love of God. For which Davyd saith, I have loved thy lawe, and hated wikkednesse and hate; he that loveth God, keepeth his lawe and his word. This

tree saugh the prophete Daniel in spirit, upon the avysioun of Nabugodonosor, whan he counseiled him to do penaunce. Penaunce is tre of lif to hem that it receyven; and *he* that holdeth him in verray penitence, is blessed, after the sentence of Salomon.

In this penitence or contricioun men schal understonde foure thinges, that is to sayn, what is contricioun, and whiche ben the causes that moeven men to contricioun, and how he schulde be contrit, and what contricioun availeth to the soule. Thanne it is thus, that contricioun is the verray sorwe that a man receyveth in his herte for his synnes, with sad purpos to schryve him, and to doo penaunce, and never more to don synne. And this sorwe schal be in this maner, as saith seint Bernard; it schal ben hevy and grevous, and ful scharp and poynaunt in herte; first, for man hath agilted his Lord and his creatour; and more scharp and poynaunt, for he hath agiltid his fader celestial; and yit more scharp and poynaunt, for he hath wratthed and agilt him that bought him with his precious blood, and hath delyvered us fro the bondes of synne, and fro the cruelté of the devel, and fro the peynes of helle.

The causes that oughten to moeve a man to contricioun ben vj. First a man schal remembre him of his synnes. But loke that thilke remembraunce be to no delyt of him by no way, but gret schame and sorwe for his gilt. For Job saith that synful men doon werkes worthy of confessioun. And therfor saith Ezechiel, I wol remembre *me* alle the yeres of my lyf, in bitternesse

of myn herte. And God saith in thapocalips, Remembre yow from whens that ye ben falle, for biforn that tyme that ye synnede, ye were the children of God, *and lyme of the regne of God;* but for youre synne ye be woxe thral, and foul, and membres of the feend, hate of aungels, sclaunder of holy chirche, and foode of the false serpent, perpetual matier of the fuyr of helle, and yet more foule and abhominable, for ye trespassen so ofte tyme, as doth the hound that torneth to ete his spewyng; and yet ye ben fouler for youre longe continuyng in synne, and youre synful usage, for whiche ye ben roten in youre synne, as a beest in his donge. Suche maner of thoughtes make a man have schame of his synne, and no delit; and God saith, by the prophete Ezechiel, ye schul remembre yow of youre weyes, and thay schal displese yow. Sothly, synnes ben the wayes that leden folk to helle.

The secounde cause that oughte make a man to have disdeyn of his synne is this, that, as seith seint Petre, who so doth synne, is thral of synne, and synne put a man in gret thraldom. And therfore saith the prophete Ezechiel, I wente sorwful, in disdeyn of myself. Certes, wel oughte a man have disdeyn of synne, and withdrawe him fro that thraldom and vilonye. And lo what saith Seneca in this matiere. He saith thus, though I wiste, that ne*ythe*re God ne man schulde never knowe it, yit wold I have disdeyn for to do synne. And the same Seneca also saith, I am born to gretter thinges than to be thral to my body, or than for to make of my body a thral. Ne a fouler thral may

no man, ne womman, make of his body, than yive his body to synne. And were it the foulest cherl, or the foulest womman, that lyveth, and lest of value, yet is *he chaunged* thanne *by* synne *and* more foul, and more in servitude. Ever fro the heigher degre that man fallith, the more he is thral, and more *unto* God *and to the werlde*, vile and abhominable. O goode God! wel oughte a man have gret disdayn of such a thing that thorugh synne, ther he was free, now is he maked bonde. And therfore saith seint Austyn, if thou hast disdayn *of thy servaunt, if he agilte or synne, have thou than disdeine* that thou thiself schuldist doon synne. Tak reward of thy value, that thou be nought to foul in thiself. Allas! wel oughte men have disdeyn to be servauntes and thralles to synne, and sore ben aschamed of hemself, that God of his endeles goodnes hath set hem in heigh estate, or yeven hem witte, strength of body, hele, beauté, or prosperité, and bought hem fro the deth with his herte blood, that thay so unkindely ayeinst his gentilesce quyten *him* so vileynsly, to slaughter of her oughne soules. O goode God! ye wommen that ben of so gret beauté, remembreth yow of the proverbe of Salamon, that saith he likeneth a fair womman, that is a fool of hir body, to a ryng of gold that were in the groyn of a sowe; for right as a sowe wroteth in everich ordure, so wrootith sche hir beauté in stynkyng ordure of synne.

The thridde cause, that oughte moeve a man to contricioun, is drede of the day of doome, and of the orrible peynes of helle. For as seint Jerom saith, at every tyme that I remembre *me* of the day

of doom, I quake; for whan I ete or drinke, or what so that I doo, ever semeth me that the trompe sowneth in myn eere, Riseth ye up that ben deede, and cometh to the juggement. O goode God! mochil ought a man to drede such a juggement, ther as we schul be alle, as saith seint Poul, biforn the sete of our Lord Jhesu Crist; wher as he schal make a general congregacioun, wher as no man may ben absent; for certes ther avayleth non essoyne ne excusacioun; and nought oonly, that oure defaute schal *be juged, but eek that alle oure werkes schul* be openly knowen. And, as seint Bernard saith, ther schal no pleynyng avayle, ne no sleight; we schuln yive rekenyng of every ydel word. Ther schulle we have a juge that may nought be disceyved ne corrupt; and why? for certes, alle oure thoughtes ben descovered as to him, ne for prayer ne for meede he nyl not be corupt. And therfore saith Salamon, the wrath of God ne wol nought spare no wight, for praier ne for yifte. And therfore at the day of doom ther is noon hope to eschape. Wherfore, as seint Anselm seith, ful greet anguisch schuln the synful folk have at that tyme; there schal be the sterne and the wroth juge sitte above, and under him the horrible put of helle open, to destroye him that wolde not byknowe his synnes, which synnes openly ben schewed biforn God and biforn every creature; and on the lift syde, mo divelis than herte may thynke, for to hary and to drawe the synful soules to the pyne of helle; and withinne the hertes of folk schal be the bytyng conscience, and withoute forth schal be the world al brennyng.

Whider schal thanne the wrecche synful man flee to hyden him? Certes he may not hyde him, he moot come forth and schewe him. For certes, as seith seynt Jerom, the erthe schal caste him out of him, and the see also, and the aer also, that schal be ful of thunder-clappes and lightnynges. Now sothly, who-so wel remembrith him of these tydynges, I gesse his synne schal not torne him to delit, but to gret sorw, for drede of the peyne of helle. And therfore saith Job to God, suffre, Lord, that I may a while biwayle and wepe, or I go withoute retournynge to the derke lond, covered with derknes of deth, to the lond of mysese and of derknesse, wher as is the schadow of deth, wher as is noon order ne ordinaunce, but grislich drede that ever schal laste. Loo, her may ye see, that Job prayde respit a while, to wepe and biwayle his trespas; for forsothe oon day of respit is bettre than al the tresor in this world. And for as moche as a man may aquyte himself byforn God by penaunce in this world, and not by tresor, therfore schuld he praye to God yive him respit a while, to wepe and to waile his trespas. For certes, al the *sorwe that a man myht make fro the begynnynge of the werld*, nys but a litel thing, at regard of the sorwe of helle. The cause why that Job calleth helle the lond of derknes, understondith, that he clepith it lond or eorthe, for it is stable and never schal fayle; *and* derk. for he that is in helle hath defaut of light material; for certes the derke light that schal come out of the fuyr that ever schal brenne, schal torne him to peyne that is in helle, for it schewith him to thorrible develes that

him tormenten. Covered with the derknes of deth; that is to sayn, that he that is in helle, schal have defaute of the sight of God; for certes the sight of God is the lif perdurable. The derknes of deth, ben the synnes that the wrecchid man hath doon, whiche that stourben him to see the face of God, right as a derk cloude doth bitwixe us and the sonne. Lond of myseyse; bycause that there ben thre maner of defautes agains thre thinges that folk of this world han in this present lif, that is to sayn, honures, delices, and richesses. Agayns honours han they in helle schame and confusioun; for wel ye witen, that men clepyn honure the reverence that men doon to the man; but in helle is noon honour ne reverence; for certes no more reverence schal ben doon ther to a kyng, than to a knave. For which God saith by the prophete Jeremie, thilke folk that me displesen, schul be in despit. Honour is eke cleped gret lordschipe. There schal no wight serven othir, but of harm and of torment. Honour eek is cleped gret dignité and heighnes; but in helle schulle thay be al for-trode of develes. And God saith, thorrible develes schuln goon and comen upon the heedes of dampned folk; and this is, for als moche as the heyher that thay were in this present lif, the more schuln thay ben abatid and defouled in helle. Agayns riches of this world schuln thay han mysese of povert, and this povert shal be in iiij. thinges: in defaut of tresor; of which, as David saith, the riche folk that embraseden and onedin in al here herte the tresor of this world, schuln slepen in the slepyng of deth, and nothing schuln thay fynde in her hondes of al

her tresor. And moreover, the mysease of helle schal be in the defaut of mete and drink. For God saith thus by Moyses, thay schul be wasted by hunger, and the briddes of helle schuln devoure hem with bittir teeth, and the galle of the dragoun schal be her drink, and the venym of the dragoun here morsels. And forther-moreover her misease schal be in defaut of clothing, for thay schul be naked in body, as of clothing, save of fuyr in which thay brenne, and other filthis; and naked schuln thay be of soule, of alle maner vertues, which that is *the* clothing of the soule. Wher ben thanne the gaye robes, and the softe scheetis, and the smale schirtes? Lo, what saith of hem the prophete Isaye, under hem schuln be strawed motthis, and here covertours schuln ben of worms of helle. And forther-morover here disease schal be in defaute of frendes, for he is not povere that hath goode frendes; but here is no frend, for neyther God ne no creature schal be frend unto hem, and everich of hem schal hate other with dedly hate. The sones and the doughtres schuln rebellen agayns the fader and the mooder, and kynrede agayns kynrede, and chiden and despisen everich of hem other, bothe day and night, as God saith by the prophete Michias, and the lovyng children that whilom loveden so fleisschlich everych other wolden everych of hem eten other if thay mighten. For how schulden thay loven hem togider in the peyne of helle, whan thay hated everich of hem other in the prosperité of this lif? For trustith wel, her fleisshly love was dedly hate; as saith the prophete David, who-so that loveth wickidnes, he hateth his

soule, and who-so hatith his oughne soule, certis he may love noon other wight in no manere. And therfore in helle is no solace ne frendschipe, but ever the more flesshly kynredes that ben in helle, the more cursynge, the more chydynges, and the more deedly hate ther is among hem. And fortherover thay schul have defaute of alle manere delices; for certis delices ben the appetites of thy fyve wittes; as sight, hieryng, smellyng, savoring, and touching. But in helle here sight schal be ful of derknes and of smoke, and *her eyen* therfore ful of teeris; and her hieryng ful of waymentynge, and of gruntynge of teeth, as saith Jhesu Crist, her nosethurles schuln ben ful of stynkyng stynk; and, as saith Ysaye the prophete, here savoringe schal be ful of bitter galle; and touchyng of al here body *schal be* y-covered with fuyr that never schal quenche, and with wormes that never schuln deyen, as God saith by the mouth of Ysaie. And for al so moche as thay schuln nought wene that thay may deyen for peyne, and by here deth fle fro peyne, that may thay understonde in the word of Job, that saith, ther as is the schadow of deth. Certes a schadow hath the liknesse of the thing of which it is a schadow, *bot the schadowe is nouht the same thinge of whiche it is schadowe;* right so fareth the peyne of helle; it is lik deth, for the horrible anguisshe; and why? for it peyneth hem ever as though men scholden deye anon; but certes thay schul not deye. For as saith seint Gregory, to wrecchid caytifs schal be yive deth withoute deth, and ende withouten ende, and defaute withouten faylinge; for here deth schal

alway lyven, and here ende schal evermore bygynne, and here defaute schal not fayle. And therfor saith seint Johan the Evaungelist, thay schul folwe deth, and thay schuln nought fynde him, and thay schul desire to deyen, and deth schal flee fro hem. And eek Job saith, that in helle is noon ordre of rule. And al be it that God hath creat al thing in right ordre, and no thing withoute ordre, but alle thinges ben ordeyned and noumbred, yit natheles thay that ben dampned been nought in ordre, ne holden non ordre. For the eorthe schal bere hem no fruyt; (for, as the prophete David saith, God schal destroye the fruyt of the eorthe, as for hem) ne watir schal yive hem no moysture, ne the aier non refreisching, ne fuyr no light. For as seith seint Basile, the brennyng of the fuyr of this world schal God yive in helle to hem that ben dampnyd, but the light and the clernesse schal be yeve *in* hevene to his children; right as the goode man yeve fleisch to his children, and bones to his houndes. And for thay schul have noon hope to eschape, saith seint Job, atte laste, that ther schal horrour and grisly drede duelle withouten ende. Horrour is alway drede of harm that is to come, and this drede schal ever duelle in the hertes of hem that ben dampnyd. And therfore han thay lorn al here hope for vij. causes. First, for God that is here jugge schal be withoute mercy to hem, ne thay may not please him, ne noon of his halwes; ne they may yive no thing for here raunsoun; ne thay have no voice to speke to him; ne thay may not fle fro peyne; ne thay have no goodnes in hem that thay may schewe to delivere hem

fro peyne. And therfore saith Salomon, the wikked man deyeth, and whan he is deed, he schal have noon hope to eschape fro peyne. Who-so wolde thanne wel understonde these peynes and bythynke him wel that he hath deserved thilke peynes for his synnes, certes he schulde have more talent to sikyn and to wepe, than for to synge or pleye. For as that Salamon saith, Who-so that *hadde* the science to knowe the peynes that ben establid and ordeynt for synne he wolde make sorwe. Thilke science, as saith seint Austyn, maketh a man to wayment in his herte.

The fourthe poynt, that oughte make a man have contricioun, is the sorwful remembraunce of the good that he hath left to doon heer in eorthe, and eek the good that he hath lorn. Sothly the goode werkes that he hath lest, eyther thay been the goode werkes that he wrought er he fel into deedly synne, or elles thai ben the goode werkes that he hath *wroughte whil he laie in synne. Sothely the gode werkes that he* dede er he fel into synne ben amortised, and astoneyed, and dullid by ofte synnynge; that othere goode werkes that he wroughte whil he lay in dedly synne, been outrely deede, as to the lif perdurable in heven.

Thanne thilke goode werkes that ben mortified by ofte synnyng, whiche goode werkes he dede whiles he was in charité, ne mowe never quyken agayn withouten verray penitence. And thereof saith God by the mouth of Ezechiel that if the rightful man retourne agayn fro his rightwisnesse and werke wikkednesse, schal he live? nay; for alle the goode werkes that he hath wrought,

ne schuln never be in remembraunce, for he schal dye in his synne. And upon thilke chapitre saith seint Gregory thus, that we schuln understonde this principally, that whan we doon dedly synne, it is for nought thanne to reherse or to drawe into memorie the goode werkes that we han wrought biforn; for certis in the werkyng of the dedly synne, ther is no trust to no good werkes that we han don biforne this tyme; that is to say, as for to have therby the lif perdurable in heven. But natheles, the goode werkes quiken agayn and comen again, and helpen and availen to have the lif perdurable in heven whan we han contricioun; but sothly the goode werkes that men doon whil that thai ben in deedly synne, for as moche as thay were doon in dedly synne, thay may never quyken *ayeine. For certes, thinge that never hadde lif, may never quykyne;* and al be it *so* that thay availen not to have the lif perdurable, yit avaylen thay to abrigging of the peyne of helle, or elles to gete temporal riches, or elles that God wol the rather enlumyne and lightene the hert of the synful man to have repentaunce; and eek thay availen for to usen a man to do goode werkes, that the feend have the lasse power of his soule. And thus the curteys Lord Jhesu Crist ne wolde nought no good werk be lost, for in somwhat it schal availe. But for als moche as the goode werkes that men don whil thay ben in good lif ben amortised by synne folwyng, and eek sith that alle the goode werkes that men doon whil thay ben in dedly synne, been outrely deede as for to have the lif perdurable, wel may that man, that no

goode werkes werkith synge thilke newe Frenshe song, *Jay tout perdu moun temps et moun labour.* For certis synne byreveth a man bothe goodnes of nature, and eek the goodnes of grace. For sothly the grace of the holy gost fareth lik fyre that may not ben ydel; for fuyr as it forletith his werkyng, it faileth anoon, and right so when the grace faileth than lesith the synful man the goodnes of glorie, that oonly is byhight to goode men that labouren and werken. Wel may he be sory thanne, that oweth al his lif to God, as longe as he *hath lyved*, and eek as longe as he schal lyve, that no goodnes ne hath to paye with his dette to God, to whom he oweth al his lyf; for trusteth wel he schal yive accompt, as saith seint Bernard, of alle the goodes that han be yeven him in his present lif, and how he hath hem dispendid, nat so moche that ther ne schal not perische an heer of his heed, ne a moment of an hour ne schal not perische of his tyme, that he ne schal yive of it a rekenyng.

The fifte maner of contricioun, that moeveth a man therto, is the remembraunce of the passioun that oure Lord Jhesu Crist suffred for us and for oure synnes. For as seith seint Bernard, whil that I lyve, I schal have remembraunce of the passioun that oure Lord Jhesu Crist suffred for us in preching, his werynesse in travayling, his temptacioun whan he fastid, his longe wakinges whan he prayde, his teeres whan he wepte for pité of good peple; the wo and the schame and the filthe that men saide to him; of the foule spittyng that men spitten on his face; of the buffettis that men yaf him; of the foule mowes

and of the reproves that men to him saiden; of the nayles with whiche he was nayled to the cros, and of al the remenaunt of his passioun, that he suffrede for my synnes and no thing for his *owne* gilt. And ye schal understonde that in mannes synne is every maner ordre of ordinaunce turned up-so-doun. For it is soth, that God, and resoun, and sensualité, and the body of man, be so ordeyned, that everich of thise foure thinges schulde have lordschipe over *that other, as thus: God scholde have lordschip over* resoun, and resoun over sensualité, and sensualité over the body of man. But sothly whan man synneth, al this ordre, or ordinaunce, is torned up-so-doun; and thanne, for as moche as the resoun of a man ne wol not be subject ne obeissant to God, that is his lord by right, therfore lesith it the lordschipe that it schulde have *over* sensualité, and eek over the body of man; and why? for sensualité rebellith thanne agayns resoun; and by that way lesith resoun the lordschipe over sensualité, and over the body. For right as resoun is rebel to God, right so is bothe sensualité rebel to resoun and the body also. And certis this disordynaunce, and this rebellioun, oure Lord Jhesu Crist bought upon his precious body ful deere; and herkeneth in which wise. For as moche as resoun is rebel to God, therfore is man worthy to have sorwe, and to be deed. This suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man, after that he was bytraysed of his disciple, and distreyned and bounde, so that the blood brast out at every nayl of his hondes, as saith seint Austyn. And fortherover, for as mochil as resoun

of man wol nought daunte sensualité whan it may, therfore is man worthy to have schame; and this suffered oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man, whan thay spitten in his face. And fortherover thanne, for as moche as the caytif body of man is rebelle bothe to resoun and to sensualité, therfore it is worthy the deth; and this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for us upon the croys, wher as ther was no part of his body fre, withoute gret peyne and bitter passioun. And al this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist that never forfeted; *and thus sayd he,* to mochil am I streyned, for the thinges that I never deservyd; and to moche defouled for schendschip that man is worthy to have. And therfore may the synful man wel seye, as saith seint Bernard, acursed be the bitternesse *of my sinne, for which ther muste be suffered so muche bitternes.* For certis, after the dyvers discordaunces of oure wickednes was the passioun of oure Lord Jhesu Crist ordeyned in divers thinges; as thus. Certis sinful mannes soule is bytraysid of the devel, by coveitise of temporal prosperité; and scorned by disceyt, whan he cheseth fleischly delytes; and yit is it tormentid by impacience of adversité, and byspit by servage and subjeccioun of synne, and atte last it is slayn finally. For this discordaunce of synful man, was Jhesu Crist first bytraised; and after was he bounde, that com for to unbynden us fro synne and of peyne. Than was he scorned, that oonly schulde be honoured in alle thing of alle thinges. Than was his visage, that oughte be desired to be *seyn* of al mankynde (in which visage aungels desiren to loke) viley-

nously byspit. Thanne was he *scourged* that nothing had agilt; and fynally, thanne was he crucified and slayn. Thanne was accomplised the word of Ysaye, he was woundid for oure mysdede, and defouled by oure felonyes. Now, sith Jhesu Crist tok upon him thilke peyne of alle oure wikkednes, mochil oughte synful men wepe and bywayle, that for his synnes schulde Goddes sone of hevene al this endure.

The sixte thing that oughte to moeve a man to contricioun, is the hope of thre thinges, that is to sayn, foryevenes of synne, and the yifte of grace wel for to do, and the glorie of heven, with which God schal guerdoune man for his goode deedis. And for als moche as Jhesu Crist yeveth us these yiftes of his largesse and of his soverayn bounté, therfore is he cleped, *Jhesus Nazarenus rex Judæorum*. Jhesus is for to saye, saveour or savacioun, of whom me schal hope to have foryevenes of synnes, which that is proprely savacioun of synnes. And therfore seyde the aungel to Joseph, thow *schalt* clepe his name Jhesus, that schal save his poeple of here synnes. And herof saith seint Petir, ther is noon other name under heven, that is yeve to any man, by which a man may be savyd, but oonly Jhesus. Nazarenus is as moche to saye as florisching, in which a man schal hope, that he that yeveth him remissioun of synnes, schal yive him grace wel to doo. For in the flour is hope of fruyt in tyme comynge, and in foryivenes hope of grace wel to do. I was at the dore of thin herte, saith Jhesus, and cleped for to entre; he that openith to me, schal have foryevenes of synne; I

wol entre into him by my grace, and soupe with him by the goode workes that he schal doon, whiche werkes ben the foode of God, and he schal soupe with me by the grete joye that I schal yive him. Thus schal man hope, that for his werkis of penaunce God schal yive him his regne, as he bihetith him in the Gospel.

Now schal man understonde, in what maner schal be his contricioun. I say, it schal be universal and total, this is to say, a man schal be verray repentaunt for alle his synnes, that he hath doon in delyt of his thought, for delit is ful perilous. For ther ben tuo maners of consentyng, that *one of hem is cleped consentynge of* affeccioun, whan a man is moeved to synne, and delitith him longe for to thinke on that synne, and his resoun aparceyveth wel that it is synne agayns the lawe of God, and yit his resoun refreyneth not his foule delit or talent, though he seth wel apertly, that it is ayenst the reverence of God; although his resoun consente not to do the synne in dede, yit sayn some doctours, delyt that duellith longe it is ful perilous, al be it never so lite. And also a man schulde sorwe, namely for al that he hath desired agayn the lawe of God, with parfyt consentynge of his hert and of his resoun, for therof is no doute, that it is dedly synne *in the consentynge, for certis ther is no dedly* synne, but that it nas first in mannes thought, and after that in his delit, and so forth into consentyng, and into dede. Wherfore say I, that many men repente hem never of suche thoughtes and delites, ne never schrive hem of it, but oonly of the dede of grete synnes out-

ward. Wherfore I say, that suche wickid delitis and wickid thoughtes ben subtile bigilours of hem that schuln be dampned. Moreover man oughte to sorwe for his wicked wordes, as wel as his wikked dedes; for certis the repentaunce of a singuler synne, and nought repente of alle his other synnes, *or elles repente him of alle his othere sinnes, and not of a singulere sinne*, may nought availe. For certis God Almighty is al good, and therfore he foryeveth al, or elles right nought. And hereof saith seint Augustin, I wot certeynly, that God is enemy to every synnere; and how thanne he that observith oon synne, schal he have remissioun of the remenant of his other synnes? Nay. And fortherover, contricioun schulde be wounder sorwful and anguisschous, and therfore yivith him God pleinly his mercy. And therfore whan my soule was anguissheous withinne me, I hadde remembraunce of God, that my prayer mighte come to him. And fortherover, contricioun moste be continuelly, and that a man have stedefast purpos to schryve him, and for to amende him of his lyf. For sothly, whil contricioun lastith, man may ever hope of foryevenes. And of this cometh hate of synne, that destroyeth synne bothe in himself, and eek in other folk at his power. And therfore saith David, ye that loven God, hatith wikkidnesse; for trustith wel for to love God, is for to love that he loveth, and hate that he hateth.

The laste thing that a man schuld understonde in contricioun is this, wherof availith contricioun? I say, that som tyme contricioun delivereth man fro synne; of which that David saith, I say, quod David,

that is to saye I purposid fermely to schryve me, and thou, Lord, relesedist my synne. And right so as contricioun availith nat withoute sad purpos of schrift if man have oportunité, right so litil worth is shrifte or satisfaccioun withoute contricioun. And, moreover, contricioun destruyeth the prisoun of helle, and makith wayk and feble the strengthes of the develes, and restorith the yift of the holy gost, and of alle vertues, and it clensith the soule of synnes, and delivereth the soule fro the peynes of helle, and fro the companye of the devel, and fro the servage of synne, and restorith *it* to alle goodes espirituеles, into the companye and communioun of holy chirche. And fortherover, it makith him that somtyme was sone of ire, to be the sone of grace; and alle these thinges he provith by holy writte. And therfore he that wil sette his herte to these thinges, he were ful wys. For sothe he scholde not thanne in al his lyf have corrage to synne, but yiven his body and al his herte to the service of Jhesu Crist, and therof do him homage. For certis oure swete Lord Jhesu Crist hath sparid us so debonerly in oure folyes, that if he ne hadde pité of mannes soule, sory songe mighte we alle synge.

EXPLICIT PRIMA PARS PENITENTIÆ; ET INCIPIT SECUNDA PARS EJUSDEM.

THE secounde partye of penitence is confessioun, that is, signe of contricioun. Now schul ye understonde what is confessioun; and whethir it oughte needes be doon or noon; and whiche thinges ben convenable to verray confessioun. First schalt thou understonde, that confessioun is verrey schewyng of synnes to the prest; this is to sayn verray, for he moot schewe him of alle the condiciouns that ben longynge to his synne, as ferforth as he can; al mot be sayd, and nought excused, ne hyd, ne forwrappid; and nought avaunte him of his goode werkis. And forthermore it is necessary to understonde whens that synnes springe, and how thay *encresen*, and whiche thay ben.

Of the springing of synnes as seint Poul saith, in this wise; that right as by a man synne entrede first into this world, and thorugh that synne deth, right so thilke deth entred into alle men that synneden; and this man was Adam, by whom that synne entred into this world, whan he brak the comaundement of God. And therfore he that first was so mighty, that he schulde not have deyed, bicam siththe *suche* on that he moste needis deye, whethir he wolde or noon, and al his progenie that is in this world, that in thilke manner synneden. Loke that in the estate of innocence, whan Adam and Eve *n*akid were in Paradys, and no thing schame ne hadden of her nakidnesse, how

that the serpent, that was most wily of alle other bestis that god hadde makid, sayde to the womman, why comaundid God to yow ye schulde nought ete of every tree in Paradys? The womman answerde, of the fruyt, quod she, of the trees in Paradys we feede us, but sothly of the fruyt of the tre that is in the myddil of Paradis God forbad us for to eten, ne not touche it, lest peraventure we schulde deye. The serpent sayde to the womman, nay, nay, ye schal not d*eye* of deth, for sothe God wot, that what day ye ete therof youre eyen schal open and ye schul ben as goddis, knowing good and harm. The womman saugh the tree was good to feedyng, and fair to the eyen, and delitable to sight; she tok of the fruyt of the tree and eet it, and yaf to hir housbond, and he eet it; and anoon the eyen of hem bothe openeden; and whan that thay knewe that thay were naked, thay sowede of fige leves in maner of breches, to hiden here membris. Here may ye see, that dedly synne hath first suggestioun of the feend, as scheweth here by the neddir; and aftirward the delit of the fleisch, as scheweth here by Eve; and after that the consentyng of resoun, as schewith by Adam. For trustith wel, though so were that the feend temptid oon, *Eve*, that is to sayn the fleissch, and *the flessche* hadde delit in the beauté of the fruyt defendid, yit certes til that resoun, that is to say, Adam, consentide to the etyng of the fruyt, yit stood he in thastaat of innocence. Of thilk Adam took we thilke synne original; for of him flesschly descendit be we alle and engendrit of vile and corrupt matiere; and whan the soule is put in oure body,

right anoon is contract original synne; *and that, that was erst but onely peyne of concupiscence, is afterwarde bothe peyne and sinne;* and therefore be we alle i-born sones of wraththe, and of dampnacioun perdurable, if it nere baptisme that we resceyven, which bynymeth us the culpe. But forsothe the peyne duellith with us as to temptacioun, which peyne highte concupiscence. And this concupiscence, whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man, it makith him to coveyte, the covetise of fleisschly synne, by sight of his eyghen, as to erthely thinges, and eek coveityse of heighnesse, as by pride of herte.

Now as to speke of the firste coveitise, that is concupiscence after the lawe of oure membris, *that weren lawfulli maked, and be rihtful juggement of God, I saie, for as moche that a man* is nought also obeissant to God, that is his Lord, therfore is fleissch to him disobeisant thurgh concupiscence, which that yit is cleped norisshing of synne, and occasion of synne. Therfore, al the while that a man hath in him the peyne of concupiscence, it is impossible but he be tempted somtyme and moeved in his fleisch to synne. And this may not faile, as longe as he liveth. Hit may wel wexe feble and faille by vertu of baptisme, and by the grace of God thorugh penitence; but fully schal it never quenche, that he schal somtyme be moeved in himself, but if he were al refreynit by siknes, or by malefice of sorserye, or colde drinkes. For what saith seint Poul? the fleissh coveitith agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the fleisch; thay ben so contrarie and so stryven, that a man may

nought alway do as he wolde. The same seint Poul, after his penaunce, in watir and in lond; in watir by night and by day, in gret peril, and in gret peyne; in lond and in famyne and in thurst, and colde and clothles; oones almost stoned al to the deth; yit saide he, allas! I caytif man, who schal delyvere me fro the prisoun of my caytif body? And seint Jerom, whan he long tyme had*de* woned in desert, here wher as he hadde no compaignye but of wilde bestes; wher as he hadde no mete but herbes, and water to his drink, ne non bed but the nakid erthe, for which his fleisch was as blak as an Ethiopen, for hete, and neigh destroyed for cold; yit sayde he, that the brennyng of lecchery boylid in al his body. Wherfore I wot wel sicurly that thay be desceyved that say, thay ben not temptid in here body. Witnesse on seint Jame thapostil, that saith, that every wight is tempted in his oughne concupiscence; that is to sayn, that everych of us hath matere and occasioun to be tempted of the norischyng of synne that is in his body. And therfore seint Johan the Evaungelist saith, if that we sayn we be withoute synne, we deceyve ouresilf, and trouthe is nought in us.

Now schal ye understonde in what maner that synne waxith and encresceth in a man. The firste thing is thilke norisching of synne, of which I spak biforn, thilke concupiscence; and after that cometh the *suggestion*e of the devel, this is to sayn, the develes bely, with which he bloweth in man the fuyr of fleisschly concupiscence; and after that a man bythink*eth* him whethir he wol

don it or non, thilke thing to which he is tempted. And thanne if that a man withstonde and wayve the firste entisynges of his fleisshe, and of the feend, it is no synne; and if so be he do not so, thanne feleth he anoon a flame of delit, and thanne it is good to be war and kepe him wel, or ellis he wil falle anoon into consentyng of synne, and thanne wol he do it, if he may have tyme, and space, and place. And of this matere saith Moyses by the devel, in this maner; the feend saith, I wol chace and pursewe the man by wickid suggestiouns, and I wil hent him by moevyng or steryng of synne, and I wil parte my prise, or my pray, by deliberacioun, and my lust schal be accomplisit in delit; I wil drawe my sword in consentynge; (for certes, right as a swerd departith a thing in tuo parties, right so consentynge departeth God fro man;) and thanne wol I sle him with my hond in dede of synne. Thus saith the feend; for certis, thanne is a man al deed in soule; and thus is synne accom*pli*sid, by temptacioun, by delit, and by consentyng; and thanne is the synne cleped actuel.

For sothe synne is in two maneres, outher it is venial, or dedly synne. Sothly, whan man lovith any creature more than Jhesu Crist oure creatour, thanne it is dedly synne; and venial synne is, if a man love Jhesu Crist lesse than him oughte. For sothe the dede of this venial synne is ful perilous, for it amenisith the love that men schulde have to God, more and more. And therfore if a man charge more himself with many suche venial synnes, certes, but if so be that he som tyme discharge him

of hem by schrifte, thay maye ful lightly amenise in him al the love that he hath to Jhesu Crist; and in this wise skippith venial into dedly synne. For certes, the more that a man chargith his soule with venial synnes, the more is he enclyned to falle in deedly synne. And therfore let us nought be negligent to descharge us of venial synnes. For the proverbe saith, that many smale makith a gret. And herken this ensample; a greet wawe of the see cometh som tyme with so gret a violence, that it drenchith the schip; and the same harm doon som tyme smale droppis of watir, that entrith thurgh a litil creves into the thurrok, and into the bothum of a schip, if men be so neggligent, that thay descharge it nought by tyme. And therfore, although ther be differrence betueene these tuo causes of drenching, algates the schip is dreynt. Right so farith it som tyme of deedly synne, and of anoyous venial synnes, whan thay multiplien in a man so gretly, that thilke worldly thynges that he loveth, thurgh which he sinneth venially, is as gret in his herte as the love of God, or more. And therfore the love of every thing that is not byset in God, ne doon principally for Goddes sake, although a man love it lasse than God, yit is it venial synne; and deedly synne, whan the love of eny thing weyeth in the hert of a man, as moche as the love of God, or more. Dedly synne is, as saith seint Austyn, whan man torneth his hert from God, which that is verray soverayn bounté, that may not chaunge and flitte, and yive his herte to a thing that may chaunge and flitte; and certes, that is every thing save *onely* God of heven. For sothe, if

that a man yive his love, the which that he owith to God with al his herte, unto a creature, certes, as moche of love as he yiveth to thilke creature, so moche he reveth fro God, and therfore doth he synne, for he that is dettour to God, *ne* yeldeth not to God al his dette, that is to sayn, al the love of his hert.

Now siththe man understondith generally which is venial synne, thanne is it covenable to telle specially of synnes, whiche that many a man peraventure ne demith hem no synnes, and schryveth him not of the same thinges, and yit natheles thay ben synnes; and, sothly, as clerkes writen; this is to say, at every tyme that man etith or drinkith more than suffiseth to the sustienaunce of his body, in certeyn he doth synne; and eek whan he spekith more than it needith, he doth synne; and eek whan he herkeneth nought benignely the pleynt of the pore; eek whan he is in hele of body, and wil not faste whan other folk fasten, withouten cause resonable; eek whan he slepith more than needith, or whan he cometh by thilk enchesoun to late to holy chirche, or to other werkes of charité; eke whan he useth his wyf withoute soverayn desir of engendrure, to thonour of God, and for thentent to yelde his wyf the dette of his body; eek whan he wil not visite the sike, and the prisoner, if he may; eek if he love wyf, or child, or other worldly thing, more than resoun requireth; eek if he flatere or blaundisshe more than him oughte for eny neæssité; ek if a man menuse or withdrawe the almesse of the povere; eek if he apparaylith his mete more deliciously than it nedith, or ete it to

hastily by licouresnes; eek if he talke of vanitees at chirche, or at Goddis service, or that he be a talkere of ydile wordes of vanité or of vilonye, for he schal yelde of hem acount at the day of doome; eek whan he heetith or assureth to do thinges that he may nought performe; eek whan that by lightnes or foly he myssaith or scorneth his neighebor; eek whan he hath eny wicked suspeccioun of thing, that he wot of it no sothfastnesse: these thinges and mo withoute nombre ben synnes, as saith seint Austyn. Now schal men understonde, that al be it so that noon erthely man may eschiewe alle venial synnes, yit may he refreyne hem by the brennyng love that he hath to oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and by prayeres, and by confessioun, and other goode werkes, so that it schal but litil greve. For, as saith seint Austyn, yif a man love God in such a maner, that al that ever he doth is in the love of God, or for the love of God verraily, for he brenneth in the love of God, loke how moche that a drope of watir, that fallith in a furneys ful of fuyr, annoyeth or greveth *the brenninge of the fyre*, so moche *in like manere* annoyeth *or greveth* a venial synne unto a man that is perfyt in the love of Jhesu Crist. Men may also refreyne venial synne, by *the* resceyvyng of the precious body of Jhesu Crist; by receyvyng eek of holy water; by almes dede; by general confessioun of *Confiteor* at masse, and *at pryme*, and at complyn; and *by* blessing of bisschops and of prestes, and by other goode werkis.

Now it is bihovely thing to telle whiche ben dedly synnes, that is to sayn, chiveteyns of synnes; *for as moche as* alle thay renne in oon loos, but in

divers maners. Now ben thay cleped chiveteyns, for als moche as thay ben chief and springers of alle othere synnes. The roote of these seven synnes thanne is pride, the general synne and roote of alle harmes. For of this roote springen general braunches; as ire, envye, accidie or sleuthe, avarice or coveitise (to commune understondynge), glotonye, and leccherie: and everich of these synnes hath his braunches and his twigges, as schal be declarid in here chapitres folwinge.

DE SUPERBIA.

And though so be, that no man can telle utterly the nombre of the twigges, and of the harm that cometh of pride, yit wol I schewe a party of hem, as ye schul understonde. Ther is inobedience, avauntyng, ypocrisye, despit, arragaunce, impudence, swellyng of hert, insolence, elacioun, *inpacience, strif, contumacie, presumpcioun, irreverence,* pertinacie, veinglorie, and many another twigge that I can not telle ne declare. Inobedient is he that disobeieth for despyt to the comaundementz of God, and to his sovereigns, and to his gostly fader. Avauntour, is he that bosteth of the harm or of the bounté that he hath don. Ypocrisy, is *he* that hydeth to schewe him such as he is, and scheweth him such as he is not. Despitous, is he that hath desdayn of his neighebour, that is to say, of his evencristen, or hath despit to doon that him oughte to doon. Arragaunt, is he that thinketh that he hath thilke bountees in him, that he hath not, or weneth that he schulde have hem by desert,

or elles he demeth that he is that he is not. Impudent, is he that for his pride hath no schame of his synne. Swellyng of hert, is whan a man rejoysith him of harm that he hath don. Insolent, is he that dispisith in his juggement alle other folk, as to regard of his valieu, and of his connyng, and of his spekyng, and of his beryng. Elacioun, is whan he may never suffre to have maister ne felawe. Impacient, is he that wil not ben i-taught ne undernome of his vices, and by stryf werreth trouthe wityngely, and defendeth his folie. Contimax, is he that thorugh his indignacioun *is* agains everych auctorité or power of hem that been his soverayns. Presumpcioun, is whan a man undertakith and emprisith that him oughte not to do, or elles that he may not doo, and that is cleped surquidrye. Irreverence, is whan men doon not honour ther as hem oughte to doon, and wayteth to be reverenced. Pertinacie, is whan man defendith his folye, and trusteth to moche to his owne witte. Vaynglorie, is for to have pomp, and delit in temporal heighnes, and glorifie him in worldly estaat. Jangelyng, is whan a man spekith to moche biforn folk, and clappith as a mille, and taketh no keep what he saith.

And yit is ther a privé spice of pride, that wayteth first to be saluet er he saliewe, al be he lasse worth than that other is, paradventure; and eek wayteth or desireth to sitte above him, or to go above him in the way, or kisse the pax, or ben encensed, or gon to the offringe biforn his neighebore, and suche *semblable thinges, against his duté peraventure, but that he* hath *his herte and his entente*

in suche a proud desir to be magnified and honoured toforn the poeple.

Now ben *ther* tuo maners of pride; that oon is heighnes withinne the hert of a man, and that other is withoute. Of which sothly these forsayde thinges, and mo than I have said, aperteynen to pride that is in the hert of a man; and that other spices of pride ben withoute; but natheles, that oon of thise spices of pride is signe of that other, right as *the* gay levesselle at the taverne is signe of wyn that is in the celer. And this is in many thinges; as in speche and contienaunce, and in outrageous array of clothing. For certis, if ther hadde be no synne in clothing, Crist wolde not so soone have notid and spoke of the clothing of thilke riche man in the gospel. And seint Gregorie saith, that precious clothing is coupable for derthe of it, and for his schortnes, and for his straungenes and disgisines, and for the superfluité, or for the inordinat skantnes of it; allas! many man may sen as in oure dayes, the synful costlewe array of clothing, *and namely in to moche superfluité, or elles in to disordinat scantnes.*

As to the firste synne that is in superfluité of clotheynge, which that makid is so dere, to harm of the poeple, not oonly the cost of embrowdyng, the *de*guyse, endentyng or barryng, *ow*ndyng, palyng or bendyng, and semblable wast of cloth in vanité; but ther is also costlewe furring in here gownes, so mochil pounsyng of chiseles to make holes, so moche daggyng of scheris, for with the superfluité in lengthe of the forsaide gownes, traylinge in the donge and in the myre, on hors and eek on foote,

as wel of man as of womman, that al thilke traylyng is verrai*ly* (as in effect) wasted, consumed, thredbare, and rotyn with donge, rather than it is yeven to the pore, to gret damage of the forsaide pore folke, and that in sondry wise; this is to sain, the more that cloth is wastid, the more most it coste to the poeple for the scarsenes; and forthermore, if it so be that thay wolde yive suche pounsed and daggid clothing to the pore folk, it is not convenient to were to the pore folk, ne suffisaunt to beete here necessité, to kepe hem fro the desperance of the *colde* firmament. Upon that other syde, to speke of the horrible disordinat scantnes of clothing, as ben these cuttid sloppis or anslets, that thurgh her schortnes ne covereth not the schamful membres of man, to wickid entent; allas! som men of hem schewen the schap and the boce of the horrible swollen membres, that semeth like to the maledies of hirnia, in the wrapping of here hose, and eek the buttokes of hem, that faren as it were the hinder part of the sche ape in the fulle of the moone. And moreover the wrecchid swollen membres that thay schewe thurgh desgysyng, in departyng of here hoses in whyt and reed, seemith that half the schameful privé membres were flayn. And if it so be that thay departe here hosen in other colours, as is whit and bliew, or whit and blak, or blak and reed, and so forth; thanne semith it, as by variaunce of colour, that half the party of his privy membris ben corrupt by the fuyr of seint Antony, or by cancre, or by other such meschaunce. And yit of the hynder partye of here buttokes it is ful horrible for to see, for

certis in that partie of here body ther as thay purgen her stynkyng ordure, that foule party schewe thay to the poeple proudly in despyt of honesté, which honesté that Jhesu Crist and his frendes observeden to schewen in hire lif. Now as of the outrageous array of wommen, God wot, that though the visage of some of hem seme ful chaste and debonaire, yit notifye thay, in here array of attyre, licorousnesse and pride. I say not that honesté in clothing of man or womman is uncovenable, but certis the superfluité or disordinat skantnes of clothing is reprevable. Also the synne of here ornament, or of apparaile, as in thinges that aperteynen to rydyng, as in to many delicat horses, that ben holden for delyt, that thay ben so faire, fat, and costlewe; and also *in* many a vicious knave, mayntened bycause of hem; and in to curious harnoys, as in sadelis, and bridlis, croupours, and peytrelle, covered with precious clothing, and riche barres and plates of gold and of silver. For whiche God saith by Zacharie the prophete, I wol confounde the ryders of such horsis. These folk take litil reward of the ryding of Goddes sone of heven, and of his harneys, whan he rode upon an asse, and hadde noon other harneys but the clothing of his *povere* disciples. We ne rede not that ever he rode on other beest. I speke this for the synne of superfluité, and nought for resonable honesté, whan resoun it requirith. And fortherover, certes pride is gretly notified in holdyng of gret meyné, whan thay ben of litil profyt or of right no profyt, and namely whan that meyné is felenous and daungerous to the

poeple by hardynesse of lordschipe, or by way of offices; for certes, suche lordes selle thanne here lordschipe to the devel of helle, whan thay susteyne the wickidnes of here meyné. Or elles, whan these folk of low degré, as is thilke that holden hostilries, and susteyne the thefte of her hostilers, and that is in many maneres of disceytes; thilke maner of folk ben the flyes that folwen the hony, or elles the houndes that folwen the carayn. Suche forsayde folk strangelen spirituelly here lordschipes; for whiche thus saith David the prophete, wikked deth moot come upon such lordschipes, and God yeve that thay moote descende into helle adoun; for in here houses ben iniquities and schrewednesses, and not God of heven. And certes, but thay do amendement, right so as Jacob yaf his benisoun to Laban by the service of God, and to Pharao by the service of Joseph, right so God wil yeve his malisoun to such lordschipes as susteynen the wikkednes of her servauntes, but thay come to amendement.

Pride of the table apperith ful ofte; for certes riche men ben cleped to festes, and pore folk ben put away and rebuked; also in excesse of divers metis and drinkis, and namely of suche maner of bake metis *and dische metes* brennyng of wilde fuyr, and peynted and castelid with papire, and semblable wast, so that it is abusioun for to thinke. And eek in greet preciousnes of vessel, and in curiousnesse of vessel, and of mynstralcye, by the whiche a man is stired the more to delitis of luxurie; if so be that thay sette her herte the lasse upon oure Lord Jhesu Crist, certeyn it is a

synne; and certeinly the delites mighte be so grete in this caas, that men mighte lightly falle by hem into dedly synne. The espices that sourdren of pride, sothely whan thay sourdren of malice y-magined and avised, aforn cast, or elles of usage, ben dedly synnes, it is no doute. And whan thay sourden by frelté unavysed sodeinly, and sodeinly withdrawe agayn, al be thay grevous synnes, I gesse thay ben not dedly. Now mighte men axe, whereof pride sourdeth and springeth. I say som tyme it springith of the goodes of nature, and som tyme of the goodes of fortune, and som tyme of the goodes of grace. Certes the goodes of nature stonden outher in goodes of body, or goodes of soule. Certis, the goodes of *the* body ben hele of body, strengthe, deliver*nesse*, beauté, gentrie, fraunchise; *the* goodes of nature of the soule ben goode wit, scharp understondyng, subtil engyn, vertu naturel, good memorie; goodes of fortune been richesses, highe degrees of lordschipes, *and* preisyng of the poeple; goodes of grace been science, power to suffre spirituel travaile, benignité, vertuous contemplacioun, withstondyng of temptacioun, and semblable thinges; of whiche forsayde goodes, certes it is a ful gret foly, a man to pryden him in any of hem alle. Now as for to speke of goodes of nature, God wot that som tyme we have hem in nature as moche as to oure damage as to oure profit. As for to speke of hele of body, certes it passith ful lightly, and eek it is ful ofte enchesoun of the siknesse of the soule. *For God woote, the flesshe is a ful grete enmy to the soule;* and therfore the more that oure body is hool, the more be

we in peril to falle. Eke for to pride him in his strengthe of body, it is a foly; for certes the fleisch coveytith again the spirit; and ay the more strong that the fleisch is, the sorier may the soule be; and overal, this strengthe of body and worldly hardynes causeth ful ofte many man peril and meschaunce. Eek for to pride him of his gentrie is ful gret folye; for often tyme the gentrie of the body bynymeth the gentery of the soule; and we ben alle of oon fader and of oon moder; and alle we ben of oon nature roten and corrupt, *bothe* riche and pore. For sothe oon maner gentry is for to prayse, that apparailleth mannes corrage with vertues and moralitees, and makith him Cristes child; for trustith wel, over what man that synne hath maistry, he is a verray cherl to synne.

Now ben ther general signes of gentilessce; as schewyng of vice and rybaudrie, and servage of synne, in word, in werk and contenaunce, and usinge vertu, curtesie, and clennes, and to be liberal, that is to sayn, large by mesure; for thilke that passith mesure is foly and synne. And another is to remembre him of bounté that he of other folk hath resceyved. Another is to be benigne to his goode subjectis; wherfore, as saith Senek, ther is nothing more covenable to a man of heigh estate, than debonairté and pité; and therfore thise flies than men clepen bees, whan thay make here king, thay chesen oon that hath no pricke wherwith he may stynge. Another is, a man to have a noble herte and a diligent, to atteigne to hihe vertuous thinges. Certis, also who that prideth him in the

goodes of grace, is eek an outrageous fool; for thilke yiftes of grace that schulde have i-torned him to goodnes and medicyne, torneth him to venym and to confusioun, as saith seint Gregory. Certis also, who-so pridith him in the goodes of fortune, he is a ful gret fool; for som tyme is a man a gret lord by the morwe, that is a caytif and a wrecche er it be night; and some tyme the riches of a man is cause of his deth: *and* som tyme the delice of a man is cause of his grevous maledye, thurgh which he deieth. Certis, the commendacioun of the poeple is som tyme ful fals and ful brutil for to truste; this day thay prayse, to morwe thay blame. God woot, desir to have commendacioun of the poeple hath causid deth of many a busy man.

REMEDIUM CONTRA SUPERBIAM.

Now sith so is, that ye han herd and understonde what is pride, and whiche ben the spices of it, and whens pride sourdeth and springeth; now schul ye understonde which is the remedy agayns pride; and that is humilité or meekenes, that is a vertu thurgh which a man hath verray knowleche of himself, and holdith of himself no pride, ne pris, ne deynté, as in regard of his desertes, considering evermore his frelté. Now ben ther thre maners of humilité; as humilité in hert, another is humilité in his mouth, the thridde in his workes. The humilité in his herte is in foure maners; that oon is, whan a man holdith himself not worth biforn God of heven; another is, whan he despiseth no man; the thrid is, whan he ne rekkith nought

though a man holde him nought worth; the ferthe is, whan he holdeth him nought sory of his humiliacioun. Also the humilité of mouth is in foure thinges; in attempre speche; in humbles of speche; and *whan* he byknowith with his owne mouth, that he is such as him thenkith that he is in herte; another is, whan he praisith the bounté of another man and nothing thereof amenusith. Humilité eek in werk is in foure maneres. The first is, whan he puttith other men tofore him; the secounde is, to chese the lowest place over al; the thrid is, gladly to assente to good counseil; the ferthe is, gladly to stonde to thaward of his sovereyns, or of him that is in heigher degré; certeyn this is a gret werk of humilité.

DE INVIDIA.

After pride now wol I speke of the foule synne of envye, which that is, as by the word of the philosophre, sorwe of other mennes prosperité; and after the word of seint Austyn, is it sorwe of other mennes wele, and joye of other mennes harm. This foule synne is platly agayns the Holy Gost. Al be it so, that every synne is agayn the Holy Gost, yit natheles, for as moche as bounté aperteyneth proprely to the Holy Gost, and envye cometh proprely of malice, therfore is it proprely agayns the bounté of the Holy Gost. Now hath malice two spices, that is to sayn, hardnes of hert in wickednes, or ellis the fleisch of man is *so* blynd, that he considereth not that he is in synne, or rekketh not that he is in synne; which is the hardnes of the devyl. That other spice of envye

is, whan a man warieth trouthe, and wot that it is trouthe, and eek wan he warieth the grace that God hath yeve to his neighebor; and al this is by envye. Certes than is envye the worste synne that is; for sothely alle other synnes ben somtyme oonly agains oon special vertu; but certes envye is agayns alle vertues and agayns al goodnes; for it is sory of alle the bountees of his neighbor; and in this maner it is divers from all the synnes; for wel unnethe is ther any synne that it ne hath som delit in hitself, sauf oonly envye, that ever hath in itself anguisch and sorwe. The spices of envye ben these. Ther is first sorwe of other mennes goodnes and of her prosperité; and prosperité is kyndely matier of joye; thanne is envye a synne agayns kynde. The secounde spice of envye is joye of other mennes harm; and that is proprely lik to the devyl, that ever rejoyeth him of mennes harm. Of these tuo spices cometh bakbityng; and this synne of bakbytyng or detraccioun hath certein spices, as thus: som man praisith his neighebor by a wickid entent, for he makith alway a wickid knotte atte last ende; alway he makith a but at the last ende, that is thing of more blame, than worth is al the praysing. The secounde spice is, that if a man be good, and doth or saith a thing to good entent, the bakbiter wol torne al thilke goodnes up-so-doun to his schrewed entent. The thridde is to amenuse the bounté of his neighebor. The ferthe spiece of bakbytyng is this, that if men speke goodnes of a man, than wil the bakbiter seyn, 'Parfay, yit such a man is bet than he;' in dispraysynge of him that men

praise. The fifte spice is this, for to consente gladly and herken gladly to the harm that men speke of other folk. This synne is ful gret, and ay encresith after thentent of the bakbiter. After bakbytyng cometh grucching or murmuracioun, and som tyme it springith of in*pacience* agayns God, and somtyme agains man. Agayns God is it whan a man grucchith agayn the pyne of helle, or agayns poverté, or of losse of catel, or agayns reyn or tempest, or elles grucchith that schrewes han prosperité, or ellis that goode men han adversité; and alle these thinges schulde men suffre paciently, for thay come by rightful juggement and ordinaunce of God. Som tyme cometh grucching of avarice, as Judas grucched ayens the Maudeleyn, whan sche anoyntede the hed of oure Lord Jhesu Crist with hir precious oynement. This maner murmur is swich as whan man grucchith of goodnes that himself doth, or that other folk doon of here owne catel. Som tyme cometh murmur of pride, as whan Symon the Pharise grucchid agayn the Maudeleyn, whan sche approchide to Jhesu Crist and wepte at his feet for hir synnes; and somtyme it sourdith of envye, whan men discoveren a mannes harm that was privé, or bereth him on hond thing that is fals. Murmuryng eek is ofte among servauntz, that grucchen whan here soverayns bidden hem to doon leeful thinges; and for as moche as thay dare nought openly withstonde the comaundementz of here soverayns, yit wol thay sayn harm and grucche and murmure prively for verray despit; whiche wordes men clepe the develes Pater noster, though so be that the devel

hadde never Pater noster, but that lewed men calle it so. Som tyme it cometh of ire of privé hate, that norischeth rancour in herte, as afterward I schal declare. Thanne cometh eek bitternes of herte, thorugh which bitternesse every good deede of his neighebore semeth to him bitter and unsavery. But thanne cometh discord that unbyndeth alle maner of frendschipe. Thanne cometh scornynge of his neighebor, al do he never so wel. Thanne cometh accusyng, as whan man seketh occasioun to annoyen his neighebore, which that is lik the craft of the devel, that waytith bothe night and day to accuse us alle. Thanne cometh malignité, thurgh which a man annoyeth his neighebor prively if he may, and if he may not, algate his wikkid wille schal nought wante, as for to brenne his hous prively, or empoysone him, or sleen his bestis prively, and semblable thinges.

REMEDIUM CONTRA INVIDIAM.

Now wol I speke of the remedies agayns thise foule things and this foule synne of envye. First is the love of God principal, and lovynge of his neighebor as himself; sothely that oon ne may nought ben withoute that other. And truste wel, that in the name of thy neighebour thou schalt understonde the name of thy brother; for *certes* alle we have oon fader fleisschly, and oon mooder, that is to sain, Adam and Eva; and eek oon fader spirituel, and that is God of heven. Thy neighebor artow holden for to love, *and wilne him al godenesse, and therfore seith God, Love thine neyghebour as thiself;* that is to sayn, bothe to

savacioun of lif and of soule. And moreover thou schalt love him in word, and in benigne amonestyng and chastising, and conforte him in his annoyes, and praye for him with al thin herte. And in dede thou schalt love him in such wise that thou schalt do to him *in* charité, as thou woldist it were doon to thin oughne persone; and therefore thou schalt doon him noon harme in wikked word, ne damage him in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule, by wicked entising of ensample. Thou schalt nought desiren his wif, ne noone of his thinges. Understonde eek that in the name of thy neighebor is comprehendid his enemy; certes man schal love his enemy by the comaundement of God, and sothly thy frend schalt thou love in God. I sayde thin enemy schaltow love for Goddes sake, by his comaundement; for if it were resoun that man schulde hate his enemy, forsothe God nolde nought receyve us to his love that ben his enemyes. Agains thre maner of wronges that his enemy doth to him, he schal do thre thinges, as thus: agayns hate and rancour of herte, he schal love him in herte; agayns chydyng and wicked wordes, he schal praye for his enemye; agains wikked dede of his enemy, he schal doon him bounté. For Crist saith, loveth youre enemyes, and prayeth for hem that *speke yowe harme, and eke for hem that* yow chacen and pursewen; and doth bounté to hem that yow haten. *Lo, thus comandeth us oure Lord Jhesu Crist to do to oure enemyes;* for sothely nature driveth us to love oure frendes; and parfay oure enemyes han more neede to love than oure frendes. For sothely to

hem that more neede have, certis to hem schul men do goodnes. And certis in thilke dede have we *the* remembraunce of the love of Jhesu Crist that dyede for his enemys. And in als moche as thilke love is more grevous to parforme, so moche is the more gret remedye and meryt, and therfore the lovyng of oure enemy hath confoundid the venym of the devel; for right as the devel is confoundid by humilité, right so is he woundid to the deth by love of oure enemy. Certes thanne is love the medicine that castith out the venym of envye fro mannes hert. The spices of this part schuln be more largely declared in here chapitres folwynge.

DE IRA.

After envye wol I descryven the synne of ire; for sothely who so hath envye upon his neighebor, anoon he wol comunly fynde him a matiere of wraththe in word or in dede agayns him to whom he hath envie. And as wel cometh ire of pride as of envye, for sothly he that is proud or envyous is lightly wroth. This synne of ire, after the descryvyng of seint Austeyn, is wikked wille to ben avengid by word or by dede. Ire, after the philosofer, is the fervent blood of man i-quiked in his hert, thurgh which he wolde harm to him that him hatith; for certes the hert of man by eschawfyng and moevyng of his blood waxith so trouble, that he is out of alle juggements of resoun. But ye schal understonde that ire is in tuo maneres, that oon of hem is good, that other is wikke. The good ire is by jalousy of goodnesse, thurgh which

a man is wroth with wikkidnes and *ayeines wykkednesse.* And therefore saith a wise man, that ire is bet than play. This ire is with deboneireté, and it is wroth without bitternes; not wroth with the man, but wroth with the mysdedes of the man; as saith the prophet David, *Irascimini, et nolite peccare, etc.* Now understonde that wikked ire is in tuo maners, that is to sayn, sodeyn ire or hastif ire withoute avysement and consenting of resoun; the menynge and sentence of this is, that the resoun of a man ne consentith not to thilke sodein ire, and thanne is it venial. Another ire is ful wicked, that cometh of felony of herte, avysed and cast biforn, with wickid wille to do vengeaunce, and therto his resoun consentith; and sothely this is deedly synne. This ire is so displesaunt to God, that it troublith his hous, and chaceth the holy Gost out of mannes soule, and wastith and destroyeth the liknes of God, that is to saye, the vertu that is in mannes soule, and put in him the likenes of the devel, and bynymeth the man fro God that is his rightful lord. This ire is a ful greet plesaunce to the devel, for it is the develes fornays that is eschaufid with the fuyr of helle. For certes right so as fuyr is more mighty to destroye erthely thinges, than eny other element, right so ire is mighty to destroye alle spirituel thinges. Loke how that fuyr of smale gledis, that ben almost dede under asshen, wolden quiken agayn whan thay ben touched *with brimstoon, right so ire wille evermore qwyken ayeine whan it is touched* by pride that is covered in mannes herte. For certes fuyr may nought come out of no thing,

but-*if it were first in the same thinge* naturelly; as fuyr is drawe out of flintes with steel. Right so as pride is often tyme mater of ire, right so is rancour norice and keper of ire. Ther is a maner tree, as saith seint Isydre, that whan men maken fuyr of thilke tree, and cover the colis with asshen, sothly the fuyr of it wol lasten al a yer or more; and right so fareth it of rancour, whan it oones is conceyved in the hertis of som men, certein it wol lasten from oon Estren day until another Ester day, and more. But certis thilke man is ful fer fro the mercy of God al thilke while.

In this forsaide develes fornays ther forgen thre schrewes; pride, that ay blowith and encresith the fuyr by chidyng and wickid wordis; thanne stont envye, and *holdeth* the hoote iren upon the hert of man, with a paire of longe tonges of rancour; and thanne stont the sinne of contumelie or strif and cheste, and baterith and forgeth by vileyns reprevynges. Certes this cursed synne annoyeth bothe to the man himsilf, and eek to his neighebor. For sothely almost al the harm that eny man doth to his neighebour cometh thurgh wraththe. For certes, outrageous wraththe doth al that ever the devyl him comaundeth; for he ne spareth neyther *for our Lord* Jhesu Crist, ne his *swete* moodir; and in his outrageous anger and ire, allas! ful many oon at that tyme felith in his herte ful wikkedly, bothe of Crist, and eek of alle his halwes. Is nat this a cursed vice? Yis, certis. It bynymeth fro man his witte and his resoun, and al his deboneire lyf spirituel, that scholde kepen his soule. Certes it bynymeth eek Goddis dewe lord-

schipe (and that is mannes soule) and the love of his neighebor; hit stryveth eek alday agayns trouthe; it reveth him eek the quiete of his hert, and subvertith his herte and his soule.

Of ire cometh these stynkynge engendrures; first, hate, that is old wraththe; discord, thurgh which a man forsakith his olde frend that he hath loved ful longe; and thanne cometh werre, and every maner of wronge that man doth to his neighebor in body or *in* catel. Of this cursed synne of ire cometh eek manslaughter. And understonde wel that homicidie (that is, manslaughter) is in divers wise. Som maner of homicidie is spirituel, and som is bodily. Spirituel manslaughter is in sixe thinges. First, by hate, as saith seint Johan, he that hateth his brother is an homicide. Homicide is eek by bakbytyng, of whiche bakbiters saith Salamon, that thay have twaye swerdes with whiche thay slen here neighebors; for sothely as wikke is to bynyme his good name as his lif. Homicidy is eek in yevyng of wikkid counseil by fraude, as for to yeve counseil to areyse wicked and wrongful custumes and taliages; of whiche saith Salomon, a leoun roryng and bere hungry ben like to the cruel lordschipes, in withholdyng or abrigging of the schipe or the hyre or the wages of servauntes, or ellis in usure, or in withdrawyng of almes of pore folk. For whiche the wise man saith, feedith him that almost dyeth for hunger, for sothely but-if thou feede him thou slest him. And eek these ben dedly synnes. Bodily manslaughter is, whan thou sleest him with thy tonge in other manere, as whan

thou comaundist to slen a man, or elles yivest counseil to slee a man. Manslaughter in dede is in foure maneres. That oon is by lawe, right as a justice dampnith him that is coupable to the deth; but let the justice be war that he do it rightfully, and that he do it nought for delit to spille blood, but for keping of rightwisnes. Another homicidy is doon for necessité, as whan a man sleth another him defendaunt, and that he ne may noon other wise eschape fro his owen deth; but certeynly, if he may escape withoute slaughter of his adversarie, and sleth him, he doth synne, and he schal bere penaunce as for dedly synne. Eek if a man by caas or adventure schete an arwe or cast a stoon with which he sleth a man, he is an homicide. Eke if a womman by negligence overlye hir child in hir sleping, it is homicide and deedly synne. Eke whan man distourbith concepcioun of a child, and makith a womman outher bareyn by drinke of venemous herbis, thurgh whiche she may nought conceyve, or sleth *hir* child by drynkes, or elles putteth certeyn material thinges in *hir* secre place to slee the child, or elles doth unkyndely synne, by which man, or womman, schedith here nature in man*ere* or in place ther as the child may nought be conceyved; or ellis if a womman have conceyved, and hurt hirself, and sleth the child, yit is it homycidie. What say we eek of wommen that mordren here children for drede of worldly schame? Certes, *it is* an horrible homicidy. Eek if a man approche to a womman by desir of lecchery, thurgh the which the child is perischt; or elles smitith a womman wytyngly, thurgh which sche sleeth hir

child; alle these ben homicides, and *dedely orrible* synnes. Yit cometh ther of ire many mo synnes, as wel in word, as in werk and thought; as he that arettith upon God, and blamith God of thing of which he is himself gulty, or despisith God and alle his halwes, as doon these cursed hasardours in diveris cuntrees. This cursed synne don thay, whan thay felen in here herte ful wickidly of God and his halwes. Also whan thay treten unreverently the sacrament of the auter; thilke synne is so gret, that unnethe may it be relessed, but that the mercy of God passith alle his werkes, and is so gret and so benigne. Thanne cometh of ire attry anger, whan a man is scharply amonested in his schrifte to forlete synne, *thanne* wol he be angry, and answere hokerly and angrily, to defenden or excusen his synne by unstedefastnesse of his fleisch; or elles he dide it to holde companye with his felawes; or ellis he saith the fend entised him; or elles he dide it for his youthe; or ellis his complexioun is so corrageous that he may not forbere; or ellis it is desteny, *as he seith, unto a certeine age; or elles he seith it* cometh him of gentilesce of his auncetrie, and semblable thinges. Alle these maner of folk so wrappen hem in here synnes, that thay wol nought deliver hemself. For sothely, no wight that excuseth him wilfully of his synne, may nought be delivered of his synne, til that he mekely biknoweth his synne. After this thanne *commeth swereinge*, that is expres agayns the comaundementz of God; and this bifallith often of angir and of ire. God saith, thou schalt not take the name of thy Lord God in vayn or in ydil. Also, oure

Lord Jhesu Crist saith by the word of seint Mathew, ne *schal* ye not swere in alle manere, neither by heven, for it is Goddes trone, ne by the eorthe, for it is the benche of his feet, ne by Jerusalem, for it is the cité of a gret king, ne by thin heed, for thou may nought make an her whit ne blak; but sayeth, by youre word, ye, ye, and nay, nay; and what it is more, it is of evel. Thus saith Jhesu Crist. For Cristes sake, swereth not so synfully, in dismembring of Crist, by soule, herte, boones, and body; for certes it semeth, that ye thenke that cursed Jewes ne dismembrit nought ynough the precious persone of Crist, but ye dismembre him more. And if so be that the lawe compelle yow to swere, thanne reule yow after the lawe of God in youre swering, as saiith Jeremie, c°. iiij^to^. Thou schalt kepe thre condiciouns, thou schalt swere in trouthe, in doom, and in rightwisnes. This is to sayn, thou schalt swere soth; for every lesyng is agayns Crist; for Crist is verray trouthe. And think wel this, that every gret swerer, not compellid lawfully to swere, the wounde schal not depart fro his hous, whil he useth such unleful sweringe. Thou schalt eek swere in doom, whan thou art constreigned by thy domesman to witnesse the trouthe. Eek thou schalt not swere for envye, ne for favour, ne for meede, but *onely* for rightwisnesse, *and* for declaring of it to *the* worschip of God, and helping of thin evencristen. And therfore every man that takith Goddes name in ydil, or falsly swerith with his mouth, or elles takith on him the name of Crist, and callith himself a cristen man, and lyveth agayn Cristes lyvyng and his

teching, alle thay take *Goddes* name in ydel. Loke eek what saith seint Peter, *Act. c°. iiij^to. Non est aliud nomen sub cælo, etc.;* There is noon other name, saith seint Peter, under heven ne yeven to noon men, in which thay mowe be saved, that is to sayn, but in the name of Jhesu Crist. Tak heede eek how precious *is* the name of Crist, as saith seint Poule, *ad Philippenses ij°. In nomine Jhesu, etc.* that in the name of Jhesu every kne of hevenly creatures, or erthely, or of helle, schulde bowe; *for it is so hihe and so worschipfulle, that the cursed fende in helle scholde* tremble to heeren it nempned. Thanne semeth it, that men that sweren so horribly by his blessed name, that thay despise it more boldely than dede the cursed Jewes, or elles the devel, that tremblith whan he heerith his name.

Now certis, sith that swering (but if it be lawfully doon) is so heihly defendid, moche wors is forswering falsely, and yit needeles.

What say we eek of hem that deliten hem in swering, and holden it a gentery or manly dede to swere grete othis? And what of hem that of verray usage ne cessen nought to swere grete othis, al be the cause not worth a strawe? Certes this is horrible synne. Sweryng sodeynly without avysement is eek a gret synne. But let us now go to thilke horrible sweryng of adjuracioun and conjuraciouns, as doon these false enchauntours or nigromanciens in bacines ful of water, or in a bright swerd, in a *cercle*, or in a fuyr, or in the schulder bon of a scheep; I can not sayn, but that thay doon cursedly and dampnably agains Christ, and the faith of holy chirche.

What saye we of hem that bilieven on divinailes, as by flight or by nois of briddes or of bestes, or by sort, by geomancie, by dremes, by chirkyng of dores or crakking of howses, by gnawyng of rattis, and such maner wrecchidnes? Certis, al this thing is defended by God and holy chirche, for whiche thay ben accursed, til thay come to amendement, that on such filthe bisetten here bileeve. Charmes for woundes or malady of men or of bestes, if thay take eny effect, it may be paradventure that God suffreth hit, for folk schulde yeve the more faith and reverence to his name.

Now wol I speke of lesynge, whiche generally is fals signifiaunce of word, in entent to desceyven his evencristen. Som lesyng is, of whiche ther cometh noon avauntage to noon wight; and som lesyng torneth to the ease or profit of som man, and to damage of another man. Another lesyng is, for to save his lif or his catel. Another lesyng cometh of delit for to lye, in which delit thay wol*le* forge a long tale, and paynte it with alle circumstaunces, wher as the ground of the tale is fals. Som lesyng cometh, for he wolde susteyne his word. Som lesyng cometh of rechelesnes withoute avisement, and semblable thinges.

Let us now touche the vice of flaterie, which cometh not gladly, but for drede, or for coveitise. Flaterie is generally wrongful preysing. Flaterers ben the develes norices, that norisshen his children with mylk of losingerie. For sothe Salamon saith, that flaterie is worse than detraccioun; for som tyme detraccioun makith an hawteyn man be the more humble, for he dredith detraccioun, but certes flaterie makith a man to enhaunsen his hert and his

countenaunce. Flaterers ben the develes enchauntours, for thay make man to wene of himself that he is like to that he is nought like. Thay ben like Judas, that bitraised *God; and thise flaterers bitrayen a man* to selle him to his enemy, that is the devel. Flaterers ben the develes chapeleyns, that singen ay *Placebo*. I rekene flaterie in the vices of ire; for ofte tyme if oon man be wroth with another, thanne wol he flatere som man to mayntene him in his querel.

Speke we now of such cursyng as cometh of irous hert. Malisoun generally may be said every maner power of harm; such cursyng bireveth man fro the regne of God, as saith seint Poule. And ofte tyme such cursyng wrongfully retourneth agayn to hym that curseth, as *a birde* retourneth agayn to his owne nest. And over alle thinges men oughten eschewe to cursen here oughne children, and yive to the devel here engendrure, as ferforth as in hem is; certis it is gret peril and gret synne.

Let us thanne speke of chydynge and reproche, whiche that ben ful grete woundes in mannes hert, *for they unswen the semes of frendschipe in mannes herte;* for certis, unnethe may a man plainly ben accordid with him that him openly revyled, reproved, and disclaundrid; this is a ful grisly synne, as Crist saith in the Gospel. And takith keep now, that he that reproveth his neighebor, outher he reproveth him by som harm of peyne, *that he hath on his body, as mesel, croked harlotte; or by somme sinne that he doth. Nowe if he repreve him by harme of peyne,* thanne tornith the reproef to Jhesu Crist; for peyne

is sent by the rightwis sonde of God, and by his suffraunce, be it meselrie, or many other maladies; and if he repreve him uncharitably *of sinne*, as thou holour, thou dronkelewe harlot, and so forth, thanne aperteyneth that to the rejoysing of the devel, that ever hath joye that men doon synne. And certis, chidyng may nought come but out of a vileins herte, for after the abundaunce of the herte speketh the mouth ful ofte. And ye schal understonde, that loke by any way, whan any man schal chastise another, that he be war fro chidyng or reprevyng; for trewely, but he be war, he may ful lightly quiken the fuyr of anger and of wraththe, which that he schulde quenchen; and paraventure sleth, that he mighte chaste with benignité. For, as sayth Salamon, the amiable tonge is the tree of lif; that is to sayn, of life espirituel. And sothely, *a* dislave tonge sleth the spirit of him *that repreveth, and also of him which is* repreved. Lo, what saith seint Augustyn, ther is no thing so lik the fendes child, as he that ofte chideth. Seint Poule seith eek, *a* servaunt of God bihoveth nought to chide. And though that chidyng be a vileins thing bitwixe alle maner folk, yit is it certes more uncovenable bitwix a man and his wif, for ther is never rest. And therfore saith Salamon, an hous that is uncovered in rayn and droppyng, and a chidyng wyf, ben like. A man, that is in a dropping hous in many partes, though he eschewe the dropping in oon place, it droppeth on him in another place; so farith it by a chydinge wyf, but sche chide him in oon place, sche wol chide him in another. And therfore better is a morsel of bred with joye, than

an hous ful of delices with chyding, seith Salamon. Seint Poul saith, o ye wommen, be ye sugettis to youre housbondes as bihovith in God; and ye men, loveth youre wyves. Ad Colocens. iij°.

After-ward speke we of scornyng, which is a wikked thing, and sinful, and namely whan he scornith a man for his goode workes; for certes, suche scorners faren lik the foule toode, that may nought endure the soote smel of the vine roote, whan it florischith. These scorners ben partyng felawes with the devel, for thay han joye whan the devel wynneth, and sorwe whan he leseth. Thay ben adversaries of Jhesu Crist, for thay haten that he loveth, that is to saye, savacioun of soule.

Speke we now of wikked counseil; for he that wickid counseil yiveth he is a traytour, for he deceyveth him that trusteth in him, *ut Achitofel ad Absolonem*. But natheles, yet is his wikkid counseil first ayens himself. For, as saith the wise man, every fals lyvyng hath his propreté in himself, that he that wil annoye another man, he annoyeth first himself. And men schul understonde, that men schulde nought take his counseil of fals folk, ne of angry folk, *ne of grevous folk*, ne of folk that loven specially to moche her oughne profyt, ne in to moche worldly folk, namely, in counselyng of mannes soule.

Now cometh the synne of hem that sowen and maken discord amonges folk, which is a synne that Crist hateth outrely; and no wonder is, for God diede for to make concord. And more schame do thay to Crist, than dede thay that him

crucifiede. For God loveth bettre, that frendschipe be amonges folk, thanne he dide his owne body, which that he yaf for unité. Therfore ben thay likned to the develes, that ever ben aboute to make discord.

Now comith the sinne of double tonge, suche as speken faire biforn folk, and wikkedly bihynde; or elles thay make semblaunt as though thay speke of good entencioun, or ellis in game and play, and yit thay speke in wikked entent.

Now cometh the wreying of counseil, thurgh which a man is *de*famed; certes unnethe may he restore that damage. Now cometh manace, that is an open foly; for he that ofte manaceth, he threttith more than he may parfourme ful ofte tyme. Now cometh idele wordes, that is withoute profyt of him that spekith tho wordes, and eek of him that herkeneth tho wordes; or elles ydele wordes ben tho that ben needeles, or withouten entent of naturel profyt. And al be it that ydile wordes ben som tyme venial synne, yit schulde men doute hem for we schuln yive rekenynge of hem bifore God. Now comith jangeling, that may nought be withoute synne; and, as saith Salamon it is a signe of apert folie. And therfore a philosophre saide, whan men askid him how men schulde plese the poeple, and he answerde, do many goode werkes, and spek fewe jangeles. After this cometh the synne of japers, that ben the develes apes, for thay maken folk to laughen at here japes or japerie, as folk doon at the gaudes of an ape; suche japes defendith seint Poule. Loke how that vertuous and holy wordes conforten hem

that travailen in the service of Crist, right so conforten the *vilens* wordes and knakkis and japeries hem that travayle in the service of the devyl. These ben the synnes that cometh of ire, and of other synnes many mo.

REMEDIUM CONTRA IRAM.

Remedye agayns ire, is a vertue that men clepe mansuetude, that is deboneirté; and eek another vertue that men clepe pacience or sufferaunce. Debonaireté withdrawith and restreigneth the stiringes and the moevynges of mannys corrage in his herte, in such manere, that thai ne skippe not out by anger ne by ire. Suffraunce suffrith swetely al the annoyaunce and the wronges that men doon to man out-ward. Seint Jerom saith thus of debonairté, that it do non harm to no wight, ne saith; ne for noon harm that men doon ne sayn, he ne eschaufith nought agayns his resoun. This vertu cometh som tyme of nature; for, as saith the philosopher, man is a quik thing by nature, debonaire and tretable *by* goodnesse; but whan debonaireté is enformed of grace, than is it the more worth.

Pacience that is another remedie agains ire, is a vertu that suffreth swetely every mannes goodnes, *and* is not wroth for noon harm that is doon to him. The philosopher saith, that pacience is thilke vertue that suffrith deboneirly alle the outrages of adversité and every wickid word. This vertue makith a man lik to God, and makith him Goddes oughne dere child, as saith Crist. This vertu destroyeth thin enemy. And therfore

saith the wise man, if thou wolt venquisch thin enemy lerne to suffre. And thou schalt understonde, that man suffrith foure maners of grevaunces in out-ward thinges, agains whiche he moot have foure maners of pacience. The firste grevaunce is of wicked wordes. Thilke suffred Jhesu Crist, withoute grucching, ful paciently, whan the Jewes despised him and reproved him ful ofte. Suffre thou therfore paciently, for the wise man saith, if thou strive with a fool, though the fool be wroth, or though he laughhe, algate thou schalt have no rest. That other grevaunce out-ward is to have damage of thi catel. Ther agayn suffred Crist ful paciently, whan he was despoylid of al that he had in his lif, and that nas but his clothis. The thridde grevaunce is a man to have harm in his body. That suffrede Crist ful paciently in al his passioun. The fertho grevaunce is in outrageous labour in werkis; wherfore I say, that folk that maken here servauntz to travaile to grevously, or out of tyme, as on haly dayes, sothely thay doon greet synne. Here against suffrede Crist ful paciently, and taughte us pacience, whan he bar upon his blisful schulder the croys upon which he schulde suffre despitous deth. Here may men lerne to be pacient; for certes, nought oonly cristen *men* ben pacient for the love of Jhesu Crist, and for guerdoun of the blisful life that is perdurable, but tho olde paynymes, that never were cristen, comaundedin and useden the vertu of pacience. A philosopher upon a tyme, that wolde have bete his disciple for his grete trespas, for which he was gretly amoeved, and brought a yerde to scourge

the child, and whan the child saugh the yerde, he sayde to his maister, 'what thenke ye to do?' 'I wolde bete the,' quod the maister, 'for thi correccioun.' 'Forsothe,' quod the child, 'ye oughte first correcte youresilf, that han lest al youre pacience for the gilt of a child.' 'Forsothe,' quod the maister al wepyng, 'thou saist soth; have thou the yerde, my deere sone, and correcte me for myn impacience.' Of pacience cometh obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist, and to alle hem to which him oughte to be obedient in Crist. And understonde wel, that obedience is parfyt, whan a man doth gladly and hastily with good herte outrely al that he scholde do. Obedience is generally to parforme the doctrine of God, and of his soveraignes, to whiche him oughte to ben obeissant in alle rightwisnes.

DE ACCIDIA.

After the synne of envye and ire, now wol I speke of accidie; for envye blendith the hert of a man, and ire troublith a man, and accidie makith him hevy, thoughtful, and wrawe. Envye and ire maken bitternes in herte, which bitternesse is mooder of accidie, and bynimith the love of alle goodnes; thanne is accidie the anguische of *a* trouble hert. And seint Augustyn saith, *it is anoye, it is anoye of goodenesse and anoye of harme.* Certes this is a dampnable synne, for it doth wrong to Jhesu Crist, in as mocht as it bynymeth the service that we oughte to do to Crist with alle diligence, as saith Salomon; but accidie doth noon such diligence. He doth alle thing with anoy, and with *w*raweness,

slaknes, and excusacioun, and with ydelnes and unlust; for which the book saith, accursed be he that doth the service of God necligently. *Than is accidie* enemy to every astaat of man. For certes thestate of *man is in thre maners; eythere it is the state of* innocence, as was thastate of Adam, biforn that he fel into synne, in which estate he is holden to worche, as in herying and honouryng of God. Another astat is thestate of sinful man; in which estate men ben holden to labore in praying to God for amendement of her synnes, and that he wolde graunte hem to rise out of here synnes. Another estaat is thestate of grace, in which he is holde to werkis of penitence; and certes, to alle these thinges is accidie enemye *and* contrarie, for it loveth no busynes at al. Now certis, this foule synne accidie is eek a ful gret enemy to the liflode of the body; for it hath no purveaunce ayens temporal necessité, for it forslowthith, and forsluggith, and destroyeth alle goodes temporels by rechelesnes.

The ferthe thing is that accidie is like hem that ben in the peyne of helle, bycause of her slouthe and of her hevynes; for thay that ben dampned, ben so bounde, that thay maye nought wel do ne wel thenke. Of accidie cometh first, that a man is annoyed and encombrid for to do eny goodnes and makith that God hath abhominacioun of such accidie, as saith seint Johan.

Now cometh slouthe, that wol suffre noon hardnes ne no penaunce; for sothely, slouthe is so tendre and so delicat, as saith Salomon, that he wol suffre noon hardnes ne penaunce, and ther-

fore he schendeth al that he doth. Agayns this roten hertid synne of accidie and of slouthe schulden men exercise hemself to do goode werkes, and manly and vertuously cacchin corrage wel to doo, thinking that oure Lord Jhesu Crist quiteth every good dede, be it never so lyte. Usage of labour is a ful greet thing; for it makith, as saith seint Bernard, the laborer to have stronge armes and harde synewes; and slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre. Thanne cometh drede to bygynne to werke eny goode deedes; for certes, who that is enclined to don synne, him thinkith it is so gret emprise for to undertake to doon werkes of goodnes, *and castith in his herte that the circumstaunces of goodnesse ben so grevous and so chargeant for to suffre, that he dar not undertake to do werkes of goodnesse,* as saith seint Gregory.

Now cometh wanhope, that is, despair of the mercy of God, that cometh som tyme of to moche outrageous sorwe, and som tyme of to moche drede, ymagynynge that he hath do so moche synne that it wil not availe him, though he wolde repent him, and forsake synne; thurgh which despeir or drede, he ab*and*ounith al his herte to alle maner synne, as saith seint Augustin. Whiche dampnable synne, if that it continue unto his lyves ende, it is clepped the synnyng of the holy gost. This horrible synne is so perilous, that he that is despaired, ther is no felonye, ne no synne, that he doutith for to do, as schewede wel by Judas. Certes, above alle synnes than is this synne most displesant to Crist, and most

adversarie. Sothely, he that despeirith him, is like the coward campioun recreaunt, that seith recreaunt withoute neede. Allas! allas! needeles is he recreaunt, and needeles despaired. Certes, the mercy of God is ever redy to the penitent, and is above alle his werkes. Allas! can not a man bythenk him on the Gospel of seint Luk, wher as Crist saith, that as wel schal ther be joye in heven upon a synful man that doth penitence, as upon nynety and nyne that ben rightful men that needen no penitence? Loke forther in the same Gospel, the joye and the fest of the goode man that had*de* lost his sone, whan the sone with repentaunce was torned to his fader. Can not thay remembre eek that as saith seint Luk, xxiij°, how that the thef that was hangid biside Jhesu Criste, sayde, Lord, remembre of me, whan thou comest into thy regne? For sothe saith Crist, to-day thou schalt be with me in paradis. Certis, ther is noon so horrible synne of man, that it ne may in his lif be destroyed with penitence, thorugh vertue of *the* passioun of the deth of Crist. Allas! what needith it man thanne to be despaired, sith that his mercy is so redy and large? Aske and have. Thanne cometh sompnolen*ce*, that is, sluggy slumbring, which makith a man ben hevy and dul in body and in soule, and this synne cometh of slouthe; and certes, the tyme that by way of resoun man schulde nought slepe, that is by the morwe, but if ther were cause resonable. For sothely the morwe tyde is most convenable to a man to say his prayers, and for to thenk upon his God, and to honoure God, and to yeve almes to the pore that first cometh in

the name of Crist. Lo what saith Salamon; who-so wol by the morwe arise and seeke me, schal fynde me. Than cometh negligence that rekkith of nothing. And how that ignoraunce be moder of alle harm, certis, necgligence is the norice. Necligence doth no force, whan he schal doon a thing, whethir he doo it wel or baddely.

Of the remedy of these tuo synnes, as saith the wise man, that he that dredith God, he sparith nought to do that him oughte to don; and he that loveth God, wol do diligence to plese God by his werkis and abounde himself, with alle his might, wel for to doon. Thanne cometh ydelnes, that is the yate of alle harmes. An ydil man is like an hous that hath noone walles; the develes may entre on every syde or schete at him at discovert by temptaciouns on every syde. This ydelnes is the thurrok of alle wickid vileyns thoughtes, and of alle jangles, tryfles, and of alle ordure. Certes the heven is yeven to hem that wol laboure and nought to ydil folk. Eke David saith, that thay ne ben not in the labour of men, ne thay schul not be whiped with men, that is to sain, in purgatorie. Certis thanne semeth it that thay schal be tormentid with the devel in helle, but-if thay don penitence.

Thanne comith the synne that men clepe *tarditas*, as whan a man is so latrede or tarying er he wil torne to God; and certis, that is a gret foly. He is like him that fallith into the diche, and wol not arise. And this vice cometh of a fals hope, that he thinkith he schal lyve longe; but that hope fayleth ful ofte.

Thanne comith laches, that is, *he that* when he

bigynneth any good werk, anoon he wol forlete it and stynte, as doon thay that han eny wight to governe, and ne take of hem no more keep anoon as thay fynde eny contrarie or eny anoy. These ben the newe schepherdes, that leten her schep wityngely go renne to the wolf, that is in the breres, or don no force of her oughne governaunce. Of this cometh povert and destruccioun, bothe of spirituel and of temporel thinges. Thanne cometh a maner coldenesse, that freseth al the hert of man. Thanne cometh undevocioun thurgh which a man is so blunt, and as saith seint Bernard, he hath such a langour in soule, that he may neyther rede ne synge in holy chirche, ne heere ne thinke on devocioun in holy chirche, ne travayle with his hondes in no good werk, that nys *to* him unsavory and al *apalled. Than* waxith he slowe and slombry, and soone wol he be wroth, and soone is enclined to hate and to envye. Thanne comith the synne of worldly sorwe such as is clepid *tristitia*, that sleth man, as saith seint Poule. For certis such sorwe werkith to the deth of the soule and of the body also, for therof cometh, that a man is anoyed of his oughne lif, which sorwe schorteth ful ofte the lif of a man, or that his tyme is come by way of kynde.

REMEDIUM CONTRA ACCIDIAM.

Agains this horrible synne of accidie, and the braunches of the same, ther is a vertu that is cleped *fortitudo* or strengthe, that is, *an* affeccioun thurgh which a man despiseth alle noyous thinges.

This vertu is so mighty and so vigurous, that it dar withstonde mightily *the devel*, and wisely kepe himself from perils that ben wicked, and wrastil agains the assautes of the devel; for it enhaunsith and enforceth the soule, right as accidie abateth it and makith it feble; for this *fortitudo* may endure with long sufferaunce the travailes that ben convenables. This vertu hath many spices; the first is cleped magnanimité, that is to sayn gret corrage. For certis ther bihoveth gret corrage agains accidie, lest that it ne swolwe not the soule by the synne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope. This vertu makith folk undertake harde and grevous thinges by *her* owne wille, willfuly and resonably. And for als moche as the devel fighteth agaynst a man more by queyntise and by sleight than by strengthe, therfore many a man schal ayeinstonde him by witte, and by resoun, and by discrecioun. Thanne is ther the vertu of faith, and hope in God and in his seintes, to *acheven* and to acomplice the goode werkes, in the whiche he purposith fermely to continue. Thanne cometh seurté or sikernes, and that is whan a man doutith no travaile in tyme comyng of good werk that a man hath bygonne. Thanne cometh magnificence, that is to saye, whan a man doth and parformith grete werkes of goodnesse that he hath bygonne, and that is thend why that men schulden do goode werkes. For in the accomplising of grete goode werkes lith the grete guerdoun. Thanne is ther constaunce, that is stablenes of corrage, and this schulde ben in herte by stedefast faith, and in mouthe and in berying,

and in cheer, and in deede. Eek ther ben mo special remedies agayns accidie, in dyvers werkis, and in consideracioun of the peyne of helle and of the joye of heven, and in the trust of the hyhe grace of the holy gost, that wil yeve him might to parforme his good entent.

DE AVARITIA.

After accidie I wil speke of avarice, and of coveytise; of whiche synne saith seint Poule, that the roote of alle eveles and harmes is coveytise. For sothely *whan* that the hert of man is confoundid in itself and troublid, and that the soule hath lost the comfort of God, thanne seekith he an ydel solas of worldly thinges. Avarice, after the descripcioun of seint Austyn, is a likerousnes in hert to have erthely thinges. Some other folk sayn, that avarice is for to purchase many erthely thinges, and no thing yeve to hem that han neede. And understonde, that avarice ne stont not oonly in lond ne in catel, but som tyme in science and in glorie, and *every* maner *of* outrageous thinges is avarice *or covetyse*. And the difference bytwixe avarice and coveytise is this: coveitise is for to coveyte suche thinges as thou hast not; *and avarice is to withholde and kepe suche thinges as thou hast, withouten rihtful nede. Sothely, this* avarice is a synne that is ful dampnable, for al holy writ curseth it, and spekith agayn that vice, for it doth wrong to Jhesu Crist; for it bireveth him the love that men to him owen, and turnith it bakward agains al resoun, and makith that the avarous man hath more hope in his catel than in Jhesu

Crist, and *doth more observaunce in kepynge of his tresour, than he doth to the service of Jhesu Crist.* And therfore saith seint Poule, *ad Ephes.* that an averous man is in the thraldom of ydolatrie.

What difference is ther bitwen an ydolaster and an avarous man, but that an ydolaster peradventure hadde but a mawmet *or two, and the avaricious man hath monye?* for certes, every floreine in his coffre is his mawmet. And certes, the synne of mawmetrie is the firste thing that God defendith in the ten comaundementz, as berith witnes in *Exod. cap.* xx, Thou schalt have noone false goddes biforn me, ne thou schalt make to the no grave thing. Thus is he an averous man, that loveth his tresor toforn God, and an ydolaster. Thurgh this cursed synne of avarice and coveytise comen these harde lordschipes, thurgh whiche men ben destreyned by talliages, custumes, and cariages, more than here dueté of resoun is; and elles take thay of here bondemen amercimentes, whiche mighte more resonably ben callid extorciouns than mercymentis. Of whiche mersyments and raunsonyng of bondemen, some lordes stywardes seyn, that it is rightful, for as moche as a cherl hath no temporel thing that it nys his lordes, as thay sayn. But certes, thise lordeshipes doon wrong, that bireven here bondemen thinges that thay never yave hem. *Augustinus de Civitate Dei, libro* ix. Soth is *that* the condicioun of thraldom, and the firste cause of thraldom is *for* sin. *Genes.* v.

Thus may ye seen, that the gilt deserved thraldom, but not nature. Wherfore these lordes schulden nought to moche glorifie in here lord-

schipes, sith that by naturel condicioun thay ben nought lordes over here thralles, but for *that* thraldom com first by the desert of synne. And forther-over, ther as the lawe sayth, that temporel goodes of bondefolk been the goodes of her lord*schipes*; ye, that is to understonde, the goodes of the emperour, to defende *hem* in here right, but not to robbe hem ne to reve hem. And therfore seith Seneca, thi prudence schulde live benignely with thi thrallis. Thilke that thay clepe thralles, ben Goddes poeple; for humble folk ben Cristes frendes; thay ben contubernially with the Lord. Thenk eek as of such seed as cherles springen, of such seed springe lordes; as wel may the cherl be saved as the lord. The same deth that takith the cherl, *the same deth taketh the lord. Wherefore I rede, do riht so with thi cherle* as thou woldist thi lord dide with the, if thou were in his plyt. Every sinful man is a cherl as to synne. I rede the certes, thou lord, *that thou* werke in such a wise with thy cherles that thay rather love the than drede the. I wot wel, ther is degre above degre, as resoun is and skil, that men don her devoir ther as it is dewe; but certes, extorciouns, and despit of oure undirlinges, is dampnable.

And forthermore understonde wel, that conquerours or tyrauntes maken ful ofte thralles of hem that born ben of als royal blood as ben thay that hem conqueren. This name of cherldom was never erst couth til Noe sayde that his sone Chanaan schulde be thral of his bretheren for his synne. What say we thanne of hem that pylen and doon extorciouns to holy chirche? Certis.

the swerdes that men yeven first to a knight whan he is newe dubbyd, signifieth faith, and that he schulde defende holy chirche, *and not robbe hit ne pyle hit; and who so doth ys traitour to Crist.* And as seith seint Austin, thay ben the develes wolves, that stranglen the scheep of Jhesu Crist, and doon wors than wolves; for sothely, whan the wulf hath ful his wombe, he stintith to strangle scheep; but sothly, the pilours and the destroyers of the goodes of holy chirche ne doon nought so, for thai stinte never to pile. Now as I have sayd, sith so is, that synne was first cause of thraldom, thanne is it thus, that ilke tyme that al this world was in synne, thanne was al this world in thraldom, and in subjeccioun; but certis, sith the tyme of grace com, God ordeyned*e* that somme folk schulde be more heigh in estaate and in degre, and somme folkes more lowe, and that everich schulde be served in here estate and in degree. And therfore in somme contrees there thay ben thralles, whan thay han turned hem to the faith, thay make here thralles free out of thraldom. And therfor certis the lord oweth to his man, that the man owith to the lord. The pope callith himself servaunt of servaunts of God. But for as moche as thestaat of holy chirche *ne mighte not have ben,* ne the commune profit mighte nought have ben kepte, ne pees ne reste in erthe, but-if God had ordeyned som man of heiher degre, and some men of lower, therfore was soveraignté ordeyned to kepe, and to mayntene, and defende her underlynges or her subjectis in resoun, as ferforth as it lith in her power, and not to destroye ne confounde

hem. Wherfore I say, that thilke lordes that be like wolves, that devouren the possessioun or the catel of pore folk wrongfully withoute mercy or mesure, thay schul receyve by the same mesure that thay han mesured to pover folk the mercy of Jhesu Crist, but-if it be amendid. Now cometh deceipt bitwixe marchaunt and marchaunt. And thou schalt understonde that marchaundise is in *two* maneres, that oon is bodily and that other is gostly; that oon is honest and leful, and that other is dishonest and unleful. Of thilke bodily marchaundise that is honest and leful is this, that ther as God hath ordeyned that a regne of a cuntre is suffisaunt to himself, thanne is it honest and leful that of the abundaunce of this contre the men helpe another cuntre that is more needy; and therfore ther moote be marchauntz to bringe fro that oon cuntre to that other her marchaundise. That other marchaundise, that men hauntyn with fraude, and treccherie, and deceipt, with lesynges and fals othis, is cursed and dampnable. Espirituel marchaundize is proprely symonie, that is ententyf desire to beye thing espirituel, that is, thing that apperteyneth to the seintuarie of God, and to the cure of the soule. This desire, if so be that a man do his diligence to parforme it, al be it that his desir take noon effect, yit is it to him a dedly synne; and if he be ordrid, he is irreguler. Certis, symonye is clepid of Symon Magus, that wolde han bought for temporel catel the yifte that God had yiven by the holy gost to seint Petir and to thapostlis; and therfor understonde, that bothe he that sellith and he that bieth thinges espirituele

ben cleped symonials, be it by catel, be it by procurement, or by fleisshly prayere of his frendes, either *of* fleisshly frendes or spirituel frendes; fleisschly in tuo maneres, as by kynrede or other frendes. Sothely, if thay pray*e* for him that is not worthy and able, if he take the benefice it is symonie; and if he be worthy and able, it is non. That other maner is, whan man, or woman, prayen for folk to avaunce hem oonly for wikkid fleisshly affeccioun that thay have unto the persone, and that is foul symonye. But certis, in services, *for whiche men yeven thinges espirituels unto her servauntes, it mote ben understonde, that the service moot* be honest, and ellis not, and eek that it be withoute bargaynynge, and that the persone be able. For, as saith seint Damase, alle the synnes of this world, at the reward of this synne, is a thing of nought, for it is the gretteste synne that may be after the synne of Lucifer and of Antecrist; for by this synne God forlesith the chirche and the soule, that he bought*e* with his precious blood, by hem that yeven chirches to hem that ben not digne, for thay putten in theves, that stelen the soules of Jhesu Crist, and destroyen his patrimoigne. By suche undigne prestis and curates han lewed men lasse reverence of the sacrament of holy chirche; and suche yeveres of chirches putten out the children of Crist, and putten into the chirche the develes oughn*e* sones; thay sellen soules (that *is the* lambes *they* schulde kepe) to the wolf that stranglith hem: and therfore schul thay never have part of the pasture of lambes, that is, the blisse of heven.

Now cometh hazardrie with his appertenaunce, as tables and rafles, of whiche cometh deceipt, fals othis, chidynges, and alle raveynes, blasphemyng, and reneying of God and hate of his neighebors, wast of goodes, *myspendinge* of tyme, and som tyme manslaughter. Certes, hazardours ne mowe not be withoute gret synne, whil they haunte that craft. Of avarice cometh eek lesynges, thefte, and fals witnesse and fals othes. And ye schul undirstonde that these ben grete synnes, and expresce agains the comaundementz of God, as I have sayd. Fals witnesse is in word and eek in dede; in word as for to bireve thin neighebor his good name by *thy false* witnessinge, or bireve him his catel or his heritage by thy false witnesse, whan thou for ire, or for meede, or for envie, berest *fals* witnes, or accusist him, or excusist him by thy false witnes, or ellis excusist thiself falsly. Ware yow, questemongers and notaries. Certis, for fals witnessynge was Susanna in ful gret sorwe and peyne, and many another mo. The synne of thefte is eek expresse agayns Goddes hestis, and that in tuo maners, corporel and spirituel; corporel, as for to take thy neighebours catel agayns his wille, be it by force or by sleight; be it by mette or by mesure; by-stelynge eek of fals enditements upon him; and in borwyng of thin neighebores catelle in entent never to pay, and in semblable thinges. Espirituel thefte is sacrilege, that is to sayn, hurtynge of holy thinges, or of thing sacred to Crist. Sacrilege is in tuo maneres; that oon is by resoun of holy place, as chirches or chirchehawes; for whiche every vileins synne that men

doon in suche places may be clepid sacrilege, or every violence in semblable place; that other maner is as tho that withdrawen falsly the *rentes and* rightes that longen to holy chirche; and generally, sacrilege is to reve holy thing fro holy place, or unholy thing out of holy place, or holy thing out of *un*holy place.

REMEDIUM CONTRA AVARICIAM.

Now schul ye understonde that the relevynge of avarice is misericorde and pité largely taken. And men might axen, why that misericord and pité is relievyng of avarice; certes, the avaricious man schewith no pité ne misericorde to the needeful man. For he delitith him in the kepyng of his tresor, and nought in the rescowing ne relievyng of his evencristen. And therfore speke I first of misericord. Thanne is misericord, as saith the philosopher, a vertu, by which the corrage of a man is stired by the myseise of him that is myseysed. Upon which misericorde folwith *pytie, in parformynge of chariteable werkis of mercie, helping and comfortinge him that is miseased.* And certes, these moeven men to the misericord of Jhesu Crist, that yaf himself for oure gult, and suffrede deth for misericord, and foryaf us oure original synne, and therby relessid us fro peyne of helle, and amenuside the peynes of purgatorie by penitence, and yeveth grace wel to do, and at the laste the joye of heven. The spices of misericorde ben for to love, and for to yive, and eek for to foryive and for to relesse, and for to have pité in herte, and compassioun of the meschief of his even

cristen, and eek chastize ther as neede is. Another maner of remedye agayns avarice, is resonable largesse; but sothely here bihovith the consideracioun of the grace of Jhesu Crist, and of *the* temporel goodes, and eek of *the* goodes perdurable that Crist yaf us, and eek to have remembraunce of the deth that he schal resceyve, he noot not whanne, *wher ne how;* and eke he schal forgon al that he hath, save oonly that he hath dispendid in goode werkes.

But for als moche as some folk ben unresonable, men oughte to eschiewe fole-largesse, *that men* clepen wast. Certes, he that is fool-large, he yiveth nought his catel, but he leseth his catel. Sothely, what thing that he yiveth for vaynglorie, as to mynstrals, and to folk for to bere his renoun in the world, he hath synne *therof*, and noon almes; certes, he lesith foule his goodes, that sekith with the yift of his goode no thing but synne. He is like to an hors that sekith rather to drynke drovy watir, and trouble, than for to drinke watir of the welle that is cleer. And for as moche as thay yive ther as thay schulde not yive, to hem appendith thilke malisoun that Crist schal yive at the day of doom to hem that schal be dampned.

DE GULA.

After avarice cometh glotenye, which is expresse eke agayns the comaundement of God. Glotenye is unresonable and desordeyned coveytise to ete and to drynke *or elles to done ynouhe to the unmesurable or disordeyn covetyse to ete and to drinke.*

This synne corruptid al this world, as is wel schewed in the synne of Adam and of Eva. Loke eek what saith seint Poul of glotouns; many *folk so*, saith *he*, gon, of whiche I have ofte said to yow, and now I say it wepyng, that *thei bien* thenemyes of the cros of Crist, of whiche thende is deth, and of whiche here wombe is here God and here glorie; in confusioun *of hem* that so saveren erthely thinges. He that is usaunt *to this sinne of glotonye, he ne may no sinne withstande, he moste bue in servage of alle vices, for it is the develes horde, there he hideth him inne and resteth.* This synne hath many spices. The firste is dronkenes, that is thorrible sepulture of mannes resoun; and *therfore* whan man is dronken, he hath lost his resoun; and this is dedly synne. But schortly, whan that a man is not wont to strong drinke, and paraventure ne knowith not the strengthe of the drynk, or hath feblesse in his heed, or hath travayled, thurgh which he drynkith the more, and be sodeynly caught with drynke, it is no dedly synne, but venial. The secounde spice of *glotenye* is, whan the spirit of a man wexith al trouble for drunkenesse, and bireveth him his witte and his discressioun. The thridde spice of glotouns is, when a man devoureth his mete, and hath no rightful maner of etyng. The ferthe is, whan thurgh the grete abundaunce of his mete, the humours of his body been distemprid. The fifte is, *forgetelnesse* by to moche drinking, for which a man somtyme forgetith by the morwe what he dide at eve, or on the night bifore.

In other maner ben distinct the spices of glotonye, after seint Gregory. The firste is, for to ete

or drynke byfore tyme to ete. The secound is, whan man yiveth him to delicate mete or drinke. The thridde is, whanne man takith to moche therof over mesure. The ferthe is, curiosité, with gret entent to make and apparayle his mete. The fifte is, for to ete to gredely. These ben the fyve fyngres of the develes hand, by whiche he drawith folk to synne.

REMEDIUM CONTRA GULAM.

Agayns glotonye the remedie is abstinence, as saith Galien; but that holde I nought meritorie, if he do it oonly for the hele of his body. Seint Austyn wol that abstinence be don for vertu, and with pacience. Abstinence, he saith, is litil worth, but if a man have good wille therto, and but it be enforced by pacience and by charité, and that men doon it for Goddes sake, and in hope to have the blisse of heven. The felawes of abstinence ben attemperaunce, that holdith the mene in alle thinges; eek schame, that eschiewith al dishonesté; suffisaunce, that seeketh noone riche metes ne drynkes, ne doth no force of to outrageous apparaillyng of mete; mesure also that restreyneth by resoun the dislave appetit of etyng; sobernes also, *that* restreyneth *the outrage of drinke; sparynge* also, *that restreyneth* the delicat *ese to sitte longe atte his mete and softely, wherfore summe folk stonden of here owen wille to ete, because they wol ete atte lasse laysir.*

DE LUXURIA.

After glotonye thanne cometh leccherie, for these two synnes ben so neih cosyns, that ofte tyme thay wol not departe. *Unde Paulus ad Ephes., nolite inebriari vino in quo est luxuria, etc.* God wot this synne is ful displesaunt thing to God, for he sayde himself, Do no leccherie. And therfore he putte gret peyne agayn this synne. For in the olde law, if a womman thral were take in this synne, sche scholde be beten with *staves* to the deth; and if sche were a gentilwomman, sche schulde be slayn with stoones; and if sche were a bisschoppis doughter, sche schulde be brent by Goddis comaundement. Fortherover, for the synne of leccherie God dreinte al the world at the diluvie, and after that he *brente* fyve citees with thonder layt, and sonk hem into helle.

Now let us thanne speke of thilke stynkyng synne of leccherie, that men clepen advoutry, *that is* of weddid folk, that is to sayn, if that oon of hem be weddid, or elles bothe. Seint Johan saith, that advouteris schuln be in helle in watir brennyng of fuyr and of brimston; in fuyr for the leccherie, in brimston for the stynk *of* her ordure. Certis the brekyng of this sacrament is an horrible thing; hit was makid of God himself in Paradis, *and* confermed of Jhesu Crist, as witnesseth seint Mathew; a man schal lete fader and mooder, and take him to his wif, and thay schul ben two in oon fleisch. This sacrament bitokeneth the knyttyng togider of Crist and of holy chirche. *And* nat oonly that God forbad advotric in dede,

but eek he comaundede, that thou scholdest not coveyte thy neyhebors wif. In this heste, seith seint Austyn, is forboden al maner coveytise to do leccherie. Lo what seith seint Mathew in the Gospel, that who-so seth a womman, to coveytise of his lust, he hath doon lecchery with hir in his herte. Here may ye se, that nought oonly the dede of this synne is forboden, but eek the desir to do that synne. This cursed synne annoyeth grevously hem that it haunten: and first to here soule, for he obligith it to synne and to pyne of the deth that is pardurable; unto the body annoyeth it grevously also, for it dreyeth him and wastith him, and schent him, and of his blood he makith sacrifice to the devel of helle; it wastith eek his catel and his substaunce. And certes, if that it be a foul thing a man to waste his catel on wommen, yit is it a fouler thing, whan that for such ordure wommen dispende upon men here catel and here substaunce. This synne, as saith the prophete, byreveth man and womman her good fame and al here honour, and it is ful pleasaunt to the devel; for therby wynneth he the moste pray of this world. And right as a marchaunt deliteth him most in chaffare that he hath most avauntage of, right so delitith the feend in this ordure.

This is the other hond of the devel, with fyve fyngres, to cacche the poeple to his vilonye. The firste fynger is the foule lokyng of the foule womman and of the foule man, that sleth right as a basiliskoc sleth folk by the venym of his sight; for the coveytise of eyen folwith the coveytise of

the herte. The secounde fynger is the vileynes touchinge in wikkid manere. And therfore saith Salamon, that who-so touchith and handelith a womman, he farith lik him that handelith the scorpioun, that styngith and sodeinly sleeth thurgh his envenemynge; or as who so touchith warm picche, it schent his fyngres. The thridde is foule wordes, that farith lik fuyr, that right anoon brenneth the herte. The ferthe is the kissyng; and trewely he were a greet fool that wolde kisse the mouth of a brennyng oven or of a forneys; and more fooles ben thay that kyssen in vilonye, for that mouth is the mouth of helle; and namely thise olde dotard fooles holours, yit wol thay kisse and smater hem, though thay maye nought do. Certis thay ben like to houndes; for an hound whan he cometh to a roser, or by other *busches*, though he may nought pisse, yet wil he heve up his leg and make a countenaunce to pisse. And for that many man weneth he may not synne for *no* licorousnes that he doth with his wif, certis that oppinioun is fals; God wot a man may sle himself with his owne knyf, and make himself dronk of his oughne tonne. Certis, be it wif, or child, or eny worldly thing, that he lovyth biforn God, it is his maumet, and he is an ydolastre. Man schulde love his wyf by discrescioun, paciently and attemperelly, and thanne is sche, as it were, his suster. The fyfte fynger of the develes hond, is the stynkynge dede of leccherie. Certes the fyve fyngres of glotonye the devel put in the wombe of a man; and his fyve fyngres of lecchery bygripeth him by the reynes, for to throwe him into the fourneys of helle,

there as they schuln have the fuyr and the wormes that ever schal lasten, and wepyng and wayling, *and* scharp hunger and thurst, and grislines of develes, that schul al to-tere hem withoute respit and withouten ende. Of leccherie, as I sayde, sourdren divers spices: *as* fornicacioun, that is bitwene man and womman that ben nought maried, and this is dedly synne, and against nature. Al that is enemy and destruccioun to nature, is agayns nature. Par fay the resoun of a man tellith him wel that it is dedly synne, for als moche as God forbad leccherie. And seint Poule yevith hem that regne that is due to no wight but hem that doon synne dedly. Another synne of lecchery is, for to bireve a mayden of hir maydenhode; for he that so doth, certes he casteth *a* mayden out of the heighest degre that is in the present lif, and birevith hir thilke precious fruyt that the book clepith the hundrid fruyt,—I can yeve it noon other name in Englisch, but in Latyn it is i-clepid *centesimus fructus (secundum Hieronimum contra Jovinianum)*. Certes he that so doth, is cause of many harmes and vilenyes, mo than eny man can rekene; right as he som tyme is cause of alle the damages that bestis doon in the feeld, that brekith the hegge of the closure, thurgh which he destroyeth that may not be restored; for certes no more may maydenhode be restored, than an arm, that is smyten fro the body, retourne agayn to waxe; sche may have mercy, this wot I wel, if sche have wille to do penitence, but never schal it be but that sche nas corrupt. And al be it so that I have spoke somwhat of advoutre, yit is it good to speke of mo

perils that longen to advoutre, for to eschiewe that foule synne. Advoutrie, in Latyn, is for to sayn, approching of other mannes bed, thorugh the which tho that whilom were oon fleisch, abaundone here bodyes to other persones. Of this synne, as saith the wise man, many harmes cometh thereof; first, brekyng of faith; and certes faith is the keye of cristendom, and whan that faith is broke and lorn, sothely cristendom *is lorn*, and stont veyn and withouten fruyt. This synne is eek a theef, for thefte is generally to speke to reve a wight his thing agayns his wille. Certis, this is the foulest thefte that may be, whan a womman stelith hir body from hire housbonde, and yiveth it to hire holour to defoule hire, and stelith hir soule fro Crist, and yevith it to the devel. This is a fouler thefte than for to breke a chirche and stele chalises, for these advouterers breke the temple of God spirituelly, and stelen the vessel of grace, that is the body and the soule; for which Jhesu Crist schal destroyen hem, as saith seint Poule. Sothely of this thefte doutyde gretly Joseph, whan that his lordes wyf prayde him of vilonye, whan he saide, 'Lo, my lady, how my lord hath take to me under my warde al that he hath in this world, ne no thing of his *thinges* is oute of my power, but oonly ye that ben his wyf; and how schuld I do thanne this wikkidnes, and synne so horribly agayns God, and my Lord? God it forbede!' Alas! al to litel is such trouthe now i-founde. The thridde harm is the filthe, thurgh which thay breken the comaundement of God, and defoule the auctour of here matrimonye, that is Crist. For certis, in so moche as the sacrament of

mariage is so noble and so digne, so moche is it the gretter synne for to breke it; for God makide mariage in Paradis in thestat of innocence, to multiplie mankynde to the service of God, and therfore is the brekyng therof the more grevous, of which breking cometh fals heires ofte tymes, that wrongfully occupien mennes heritage; and therfore wolde Crist putte hem out of the regne of heven, that is heritage to goode folk. Of this breking cometh eek ofte tyme that folk unwar wedden or synnen with her kynrede; and namely these harlottis, that haunten bordels of these foule wommen, that mowe be likened to a comune gonge, where as men purgen her entrayles of her ordure. What saye we eke of putours, that lyven by the orrible synne of putrie, and constreyne wymmen, ye, som tyme his oughne wyf or his child, as don these baudes, to yelde hem a certeyn rente of here bodily putrie? certes, these ben cursede synnes. Understondeth eek that avoutrie is set gladly in the ten comaundements bitwixe manslaughter and thefte, for it is the grettest thefte that may be, for it is thefte of body and soule, and it is lik homicidie, for it kerveth a-tuo hem that first were makid oon fleisch. And therfore by the olde lawe of God thay scholde be slayn, but natheles, by the lawe of Jhesu Crist, that is the lawe of pité, whan he sayde to the womman that was founde in advoutrie, and schulde have ben slayn with stoones aftir the wille of the Jewes, as was her law, 'Go,' quod Jhesu Crist, 'and haue no more wille to synne or wilne no more to do synne;' sothely, the vengeance of avouterye is awardid to

the peyne of helle, but-if it be destourbed by penitence. Yit ben ther mo spices of this cursed synne, as whan that oon of hem is religious, or ellis bothe, or for folk that ben entred into ordre, as sub-dekin, or dekin, or prest, or hospitalers; and ever the higher that he be *in ordre*, the gretter is the synne. The thinges that gretly aggreggith her synne, is the brekyng of here avow of chastité, whan thay resceyved the ordre; and fortherover is soth, that holy ordre is chef of alle the tresor of God, and *is a* special signe and mark of chastité, to schewe that thay ben joyned to chastité, which that is the moste precious lif that is. And eek these ordred folk ben specially tytled to God, and of the special meyné of God; of whiche whan thay don dedly synne, thay ben the special traytours of God and of his poeple, *for they lyven of the peple to praye for the peple*, and whil thay ben suche traytours here prayer avayleth not to the poeple. Prestis ben aungels, as by the dignité of here misterie; but for sothe seint Poul saith, that Sathanas transformeth him into an aungel of light. Sothely, the prest that hauntith dedly synne, he may be likened to the aungel of derknes, *transformed into the aungel of light;* and he semeth aungel of light, but for sothe he is aungil of derknes. *Suche prestes ben* the sones of *Helie*, as schewith in the book of Kinges, that thay were the sones of Belial, that is, the devel. Belial is to saye, withoute juge, and so faren thay; thay thynke hem fre, and han no juge, no more than hath a fre bole, that takith which cow that him liketh in the toun. So faren thay by wommen; for right as a fre bole is y-nough for al

a toun, right so is a wikked prest corrupcioun y-nough for al a parisch, or for al a contray. These prestes, as saith the book, ne conne not ministere the mistery of presthode *to* the poeple, ne God ne knowe thay not; thay holde hem nought apayed, as saith the book, of soden fleissch that was to hem offred, but thay tooke by force the fleissch that is raw. Certes, so these schrewes holde hem not appayed with roasted fleissh and sode fleissh, with whiche the poeple feeden hem in gret reverence, but thay wil have raw fleisch of folkes wyves and here doughtres. And certes, these wommen that consenten to here harlotrie, don gret wrong to Crist and to holy chirche, and to alle halwes, and to alle soules, for thay bireven alle these hem that schulde worschipe Crist and holy chirche and praye for cristen soules. And therfore han suche prestis, and here lemmans eeke that consenten to here leccherie, the malisoun of al the court cristian, til thay come to amendement. The thridde spice of advoutry is som tyme bitwix a man and his wif, and that is, whan thay take noon reward in her assembling but oonly to the fleischly delit, as saith seint Jerom, and ne rekke of no thing but that thay be assemblid bycause that thay ben maried; al is good y-nough as thinkith hem. But in suche folk hath the devel power, as saith the aungel Raphael to Thoby, *for* in here assemblyng, thay putten Jhesu Crist out of her herte, and yiven hemself to alle ordure. The ferthe spice is the assemblynge of hem that ben of here kynrede, or of hem that ben of oon affinité, or elles with hem with whiche here fadres or here kynrede han

deled in the synne of leccherie ; this synne makith hem like houndes, that taken noon heede of kynrede. And certes, parenteal is in tuo maneres, eyther gostly or fleisshly. Gostly, as for to dele with her gossib ; for right so as he that engendrith a child, is his fleisshly fader, right so is his godfather his fader espirituel ; for which a womman may in no lasse synne assemble with hir gossib, than with hire oughne fleischly fader or brother. The fifte spice is thilke abhominable synne, of which that no man unnethe oughte to speke ne write, natheles it is openly rehersed in holy wryt. But though that holy writ speke of horrible synne, certes holy writ may not be defouled, no more than the sonne that schyneth on a dongehul. Another synne appertieneth to lecchery, that cometh in sleping, and this synne cometh ofte to hem that ben maydenes, and eek to hem that ben corrupte ; and this synne men clepen pollucioun, that cometh in foure maners ; som tyme *it cometh* of languisschynge of *the* body, for the humours ben to ranke and to abundaunt in the body of man ; som tyme of infirmité, for the feblenesse of the vertu retentyf, as phisik maketh mencioun ; and some tyme for surfete of mete and drynke ; som tyme of vileins thoughtes that ben enclosed in mannes mynde whan *he goth to slepe, whiche may not ben withoute synne ; fro whiche a man moste* kepe him wisely, *or* elles may men synne grevously.

REMEDIUM CONTRA LUXURIAM.

Now cometh the remedye ayens lecchery, and that is generally chastité of wikkedhede and continence that restreyneth alle the disordeigne moevynges that comen of fleischly talentes; and ever the gretter meryt schal he han that most restreyneth eschaufynges of ordure of this synne; and this is in tuo maneres; that is to sayn, chastité of mariage, and chastite of *widew*hede. Now schalt thou understonde, that matrimoigne is leful assemblynge of man and womman, that resceyven by virtu of this sacrement the bond thurgh which thay maye not be departid in al here lif, that is to saye, while thay lyven bothe. This, as saith the boke, is a ful gret sacrement: God makid it (as I have said) in Paradis, and wolde himself be born in mariage; and for to halwen mariage he was at the weddyng wher as he turnede watir into wyn, which was the firste miracle that he wrought in erthe biforn his disciples. The trewe effect of mariage clensith fornicacioun, and replenischith holy chirche of good lynage, for that is the ende of mariage, and it chaungith dedly synne into venyal synne bituixe hem that ben weddid, and maketh the hertes al one, as wel as the bodyes. This is verray mariage that was first blessed by God, er that the synne bigan, whan naturel lawe was in his *righte* poynt in Paradis; and it was ordeyned, that oon man schulde have but oon womman, and oon woman but oon man, as saith seint Augustyn, by many resouns. First, for mariage is figured bitwixe Crist and holy chirche; another is, for a

man is heed of a womman (algate by ordinaunce it schulde be so); for if a womman had*de* mo men than oon, than schulde sche have mo hedes than oon, and that were an horrible thing biforn God; and eek a womman myghte nought please many folk al at oones; and also ther ne schulde never be pees and rest among hem, for everich wolde aske his oughne thing. And fortherover, no man schulde knowe his oughne engendrure, ne who schulde have his heritage, and the womman scholde be the lasse loved fro the tyme that sche were joyned to many men.

Now cometh how that a man schulde bere him with his wif, and namely in tuo thinges, that is to sayn, in sufferaunce and in reverence, and that schewede Crist when he made first womman. For he ne made hire not of the heed of Adam, for sche schulde not to gret lordschipe have; *for* ther as the womman hath the maistry, sche makith to moche disaray; ther needith noon ensample of this, the experience that we have day by day oughte suffice. Also certes, God ne made nought womman of the foot of Adam, for sche ne scholde nought be holden to lowe, for sche can not paciently suffre. But God made womman of the ribbe of Adam, for womman schulde be felawe unto man. Man schulde bere him to his wif in faith, in trouthe, and in love; as saith seint Poule, *that* a man schulde love his wif, as Crist loved holy chirche, *that loved it so wele* that he deyede for it; so schulde a man for his wyf, if it were neede.

Now how that a womman schulde be subject to

hir housbonde, that tellith seint Peter, iij° c°; first in obedience. And eek, as saith the decré, a womman that is a wif, as longe as sche is a wif, sche hath noon auctorité to swere ne to bere witnesse, withoute leve of hir housbonde, that is hir lord; algate he schulde be so by resoun. Sche schulde eek serve him in al honesté, and ben attempre of hir array. I wot wel that thay schulde sette here entent to please her housbondes, but nought by here queyntise of array. Seint Jerom saith, that wyves that ben arrayed in silk and in purpre, ne mowe nought clothe hem in Jhesu Crist. Loke what saith saint Johan eek in the same matier. Seint Gregori saith eek, that no wight sekith precious clothing ne array, but oonly for veyn-glorie to ben honoured the more biforn the poeple. It is a gret folly, a womman to have fair array outward, and hirsilf to ben foul in-ward. A wyf schulde eek be mesurable in lokyng, and in beryng, and in laugheing, and discrete in alle hir wordes *and hir dedes*, and above alle worldly thinges sche schulde love hir housebonde with al hire herte, and to him to be trewe of hir body; so scholde an housebonde eeke ben trewe to his wif; for sith that al the body is the housebondes, so schulde here herte ben, or elles ther is bitwixe hem tuo, as in that, no parfyt mariage. Thanne schal men understonde, that for thre thinges a man and his wyf mowe fleischly assemble. The firste is, in entent of engendrure of children, to the service of God, for certis that is the cause fynal of matrimoyne. The secounde cause is, to yelden everych of hem unto other the dette of his

body; for *neyther* of hem hath power of his oughne body. The thridde is, for to eschiewe leccherie and vilenye. The ferthe for sothe is dedly synne. As to the firste, it is meritory; the secounde also, for, as saith the decré, that sche hath merite of chastité, that yeldith to hir housebonde the dette of hir body, ye though it be agayn hir likyng and the lust of hir hert. The thridde maner is venial synne; and trewly, scarsly may eny of these be withoute venial synne, for the corrupcioun and for the delit. The ferthe maner is for to understonde, as if thay assemble oonly for amorous love, and for noon of the forsayde causes, but for to accomplise thilke brennynge delyt, thay rekke never how ofte, sothely it is dedly synne; and yit, with sorwe, some folk wole more peyn hem for to doon, than to her appetit suffiseth.

The secounde maner of chastité is to ben a clene widewe, and to eschiewe the embrasynges of men, and desiren the embrasynges of Jhesu Crist. These ben tho that han ben wyves, and han forgon here housebondes, and eek wommen that han doon leccherie, and be relieved by penitence. And certis, if that a wyf couthe kepe hir al chast, by licence of hir housebonde, so that sche yeve non occasioun that he agilt, it were to hir a gret merit. Thise maner wymmen, that observen chastité, moste be clene in herte as wel as in body, and in thought, and mesurable in clothing and in countenaunce, abstinent in etyng and drynkyng, in speche and in dede, and thanne is sche the vessel or the boyst of the blessed Mag-

daleyne, that fulfillith holy chirche ful of good odour. The thridde maner of chastité is virginité, and it bihoveth that sche be holy in herte, and clene of body, and thanne is sche spouse of Jhesu Crist, and sche is the lif of aungels; sche is the preysyng of this world, and she is as these martires in egalité; sche hath in hir that tongue may nought telle. Virginité bar oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and virgine was himselve.

Another remedy agayns leccherie is specially to withdrawe such thinges as yiven occasioun to thilke vilonye; as is ease, and etyng, and drynkyng; for certes, whan the pot boylith strongely, the beste remedye is to withdrawe the fuyr. Sleping eek longe in gret quiete is also a greet norice unto leccherie.

Another remedye agains leccherie is, that a man or a womman eschiewe the companye of hem by whiche he doutith to be tempted; for al be it so that the dede be withstonde, yet is ther gret temptacioun. Sothely a whit wal, although it brenne not fully by stikyng of a candel, yet is the wal blak *of the leyte*. Ful ofte tyme I rede, that no man truste in his oughne perfeccioun, but he be strenger than Sampson, or holiere than Davyd, or wiser than Salamon.

Now after that I have declared yow the seven dedly synnes as I can, and some of here braunches, and here remedyes, sothely, if I couthe, I wolde telle yow the ten comaundements, but so heigh a doctrine I leve to divines. But natheles, I hope to God thay ben touchid in this litel tretys everich of hem alle

Now for as moche as the secounde part of penitence stant in confessioun of mouth, as I bigan in the firste chapitre, I say, seint Austyn saith, synne is every word and every dede, and al that men coveyten agayn the lawe of Jhesu Crist; and this is for to synne, in herte, in mouthe, and in dede, by thy fyve wittis, that ben sight, heeryng, smellyng, tastyng, or savoryng, or felyng. Now it is good to understonden the circumstaunces that aggreggen moche to every synne. Thou schalt considre what thou art that dost the synne, whethir that thou be mal or femal, old other yong, gentil or thral, fre or servaunt, hool or seek, weddid or sengle, ordrid or unordred, wys or fool, clerk or seculer; if sche be of thy kyn, bodily or gostly, or noon; if eny of thy kynrede have synned with hire or noon, and many mo thinges.

That other circumstaunce is, whether it be don in fornicacioun or in advoutry, or incest or noon, or mayden or noon, in maner of homicide or noon, horrible grete synne or smale, and how long thou hast continued in synne. The thridde circumstaunce is the place wher thou hast don synne, whether in other mennes houses, or in thin owne, in feld, or in chirche, or in chirchehawe, in chirche dedicate, or noon. For if *the chirche were halewed, and man or womman* spillede his kynde *withynne that place, by way of synne or by wycked temptacioun*, it is enterdited til it be reconsiled by the bischop; and the prest scholde be enterdyted that dede such a vilonye to terme of al his lyf, and scholde no more synge no masse; and if he dede, he schulde do dedly synne, at every tyme

that he song masse. The ferthe circumstaunce is, by which mediatours, as by messagers, or for entysement, or for consentement, to bere companye with felaws*chipe;* for many a wrecche, for to bere companye, wol go to the devel of helle. For thay that eggyn or consentyn to the synne, ben parteneres of the synne, and of the dampnacioun of the synnere. The fyfte *circumstaunce* is, how many tymes that he hath synned, if it be in his mynde, and how ofte that he hath falle. For he that ofte fallith in synne, despiseth the mercy of God, and encresceth his synne, and is unkynde to Crist, and he waxith the more feble to withstonde synne, and synneth the more lightly, and the latter arrisith, and is the more eschiewe to schrive him, and namely to him that hath ben his confessour. For whiche that folk, whan thay falle agayn to here olde folies, eyther thay forletin her confessours al utterly, or ellis thay departen here schrifte in divers places; but sothely such departed schrifte hath no mercy of God of his synnes. The sixte circumstaunce is, why that a man synneth, as by which temptacioun; and *yf himself procure thilke temptacioun*, or by excityng of other folk; or if he synne with a womman by force or by hir owne assent; or if the womman maugre hir heed hath ben enforced or noon, this schal sche telle, and whether it were for coveytise or for poverté, and if it was hire procuryng or noon, and alle such maner harneys. The seventhe circumstaunce is, in what maner he hath don his synne, or how that sche hath suffred that folk han doon to hire. The same schal the man telle pleynly, with alle

the circumstaunces, and whether he have synned with commune bordeal womman or noon, or doon his synne in holy tyme or noon, in fastyng tyme or noon, or biforn his schrifte, *or* after his latter schrifte, and hath paradventure broken *therby* his penaunce enjoyned therfore, by whos help or by whos counseil, by sorcery or by other craft, al moste be told. Alle these thinges, after thay be grete or smale, engreggen the consciens of a man; and eek the prest that is the jugge, may the better ben avysed of his jugement in yivyng of thy penaunce, and that is after thy contricioun. For understonde wel, that after the tyme that a man hath defouled his baptisme by synne, if he wol come to savacioun, ther is noon other wey but penitence, and schrifte of mouthe, and by satisfaccioun; and namely by tho tuo, if ther be a confessour to which he may schryve him, and the thridde if ye have lif to parforme it.

Thanne schal men loke it and considre, that if he wol make a trewe and a profitable confessioun, ther moste be foure condiciouns. First, it moste ben in sorweful bitternesse of herte, as sayde the king Ezechiel to God, I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lif in bitternes of myn hert. This condicioun of bitternes hath fyve signes; the first is, that confessioun moste be schamefast, not for to covere ne hyde his synne, but for he hath agultid his God and defoulid his soule. And herof saith seint Augustyn, the herte tremblith for schame of his synne, and for he hath gret schamefastnes he is digne to have gret mercy of God. Such was the confessioun of the publican, that wolde nought

heve up his eyghen to heven, for he had offendid God of heven; for which schamefastnes he had anon the mercy of God. And there*for* seith seint Augustyn, that such schamefast folk ben next foryevenes of remissioun. The secounde signe is humilité of confessioun; of which saith seint Petre, humblith yow under the might of God; the hond of God is myghty in confessioun, for therby God foryiveth the *thy* synnes, for he alone hath the power. And this humilité schal ben in herte, and in signe outward; for right as he hath humilité to God in his herte, right so schulde he humble his body out-ward to the prest, that sittith in Goddes place. For which in no manere, sith that Crist is soverayn, and the prest is his mene and mediatour betwix Crist and the synnere, and the synner is the lasse as by way of resoun, thanne schulde nought the confessour sitte as lowe as the synnere, but the synnere schulde knele biforn him or at his feet, but if maladye distourbid it; for he schal take no keep who sittith there, but in whos place that he sitteth. A man that hath trespassed to a lord, and cometh for to axe him of mercy and to maken his accord, and settith him doun anoon by the lord, men wolde holde him outrageous, and not worthy so soone for to have mercy ne remissioun. The thridde signe is, that thy schrifte schulde be ful of teeris, if men may wepe; and if he may not wepe with his bodily eyen, let him wepe with his herte. Such was the confessioun of seint Peter; for after *that* he hadde forsake Jhesu Crist, he wente out and wepte ful bitterly. The ferthe signe is, that he lette nought

for schame *to schryve him and* to schewen his confessioun. Such was the confessioun of Magdaleyn, that *ne* sparede for no schame of hem that were at the feste to go to oure Lord Jhesu Crist and byknowe to him hire synne. The fifte signe is, that a man or a womman be obeisaunt to resceyve the penaunce that him is enjoyned. For certis Jhesu Crist for the gultes of oon man was obedient to his deth.

The other condicioun of verray confessioun is, that it hastily be doon; for certes, if a man had a dedly wounde, ever the lenger that he tariede to warisch himself, the more wolde it corrupte and haste him to his deth, and eek the wounde wolde be the worse to hele. And right so fareth synne, that long time is in a man unschewed. Certes a man oughte soone schewe his synne for many causes; as for drede of deth, that cometh sodeinly, and *he ne is* not certeyn what tyme it schal come, or ben in what place; and eek the drecchyng of oon synne draweth another; and eek the lenger he tarieth, the ferther is he from Crist. And if he abyde unto his laste day, skarsly may he schrive him or remembre him of his synnes, or repente *hym* for the grevous malady of his deth. And for as moche as he hath not in his lif herkened Jhesu Crist, whan he hath spoken, he schal crien to Jhesu Crist at his laste day, and scarsly wol he herken him. And understonde that this condicioun moste have foure thinges. *First* thy schrifte moste ben purveyed byforn, and avysed, for wikked haste doth no profyt; and that a man can schryve him of his synnes, be it of pride or of

envye, and so forth alle the spices and the circumstaunces; and that he have comprehendid in his mynde the nombre and the gretnes of his synne, *and how longe that he hath leyn in synne;* and eek that he be contrit of his sinnes, and in stedefast purpos (by the grace of God) never eft to falle in synne; and eek that he drede and countrewayte himself, and that he flee the occasiouns of synne, to whiche he is enclyned. Also that thou schalt schrive the of alle thin synnes to oon man, and nat a parcel to oon man, and a parcel to another man; that is, understonde, in entent to parte thy confessioun as for schame or drede, for it nys but strangelyng of thy soule. For certes, Jhesu Crist is enterely al good, in him is noon imperfecicoun, and therfore outher he foryiveth al parfitely, or elles never a del. I say nought, if thou be assigned to thy penitencere for certein synne, that thou art bounde to schewe him al the remenaunt of thy synnes, of whiche thou hast ben schryven of thy curate, but-if it like the of thin humilité; this is no departyng of schrifte. Ne I ne say not, there as I speke of divisoun of confessioun, that if thou have licence to schryve the to a discret and to an honest prest, wher the likith, and eek by the licence of thy curate, that thou ne maist wel schrive the to him of alle thyn synnes; but let no synne be byhinde untold as fer as thou hast remembraunce. And whan thou schalt the schrive to thi curate, telle him eeke al thy synne that thou hast doo sith thou were last i-schryve. This is no wikkid entent of divisioun of schrifte.

Also thy verrey schrifte askith certeyn condi-

siouns. First, that thou schrive the by thy fre wille, nought constreyned, ne for schame of folk, ne for maladye, or such thing; for it is resoun, that he that trespassith with his fre wille, *that by his fre wille he* confesse his trespas; and that noon other man schal telle his synne but himself; ne he schal not naye it or denye his synne, ne wraththe him with the prest for his amonestynge to lete synne. The secounde condicioun is, that thy schrifte be laweful, that is to sayn, that thou that schrivest the, and eek the prest that herith thy confessioun, ben verrayly in the feith of holy chirche, and that a man oe nought despaired of the mercy of Jhesu Crist, as Caym or Judas. And eek a man moot accuse himself of his owne trespas and not another; but he schal blame and wite himself and his oughne malice of his synne, and noon other. But natheless, if that another man be occasioun or ellis enticer of his synne, or that the estate of a persone be such thurgh which his synne aggreggith, or elles that he may not playnly schryve hym but he telle the person with which he hath synned, thanne may he telle it, so that his entent be nought to bakbyte the persone, but oonly to declare his confessioun.

Thow schalt nought eke make no lesyng in thy confessioun for humilité, *paraventure* to sayn that thou hast don synnes of whiche thou were never gulty; as seint Augustyn saith, if thou bycause of humilité makest lesynges on thiself, though thou were not in synne biforn, yit art thou thanne in synne thurgh thy lesynges. Thou most also schewe thy synne by thyn oughne proper mouth, but thou

woxe dombe, and not by no lettre; for that thou hast don the synne, thou schalt have the schame of the confessioun. Thou schalt noughte peynte thy confessioun, by faire subtil wordes, to cover the more thy synne; for thanne bigilist thou thiself, and not the prest; thou moste telle it platly, be it never so foul ne so horrible. Thou schalt eek schrive the to a prest that is discrete to counsaile the; and thou schalt nought schryve the for veinneglorie, ne for ypocrisie, *ne for no cause but only for the doute of Jhesu Crist and the hele of thy soule.* Thou schalt not eek renne to the prest sodeinly, to telle him lightly thy synne, as who tellith a tale or a jape, but avysily and with gret devocioun; and generally schrive the ofte; if thou ofte falle, ofte thou arise by confessioun. And though thou schryve the ofter than oones of synne of which thou hast ben schriven, it is the more merite; and, as saith seint Augustyn, thou schalt have the more lightly relessyng and grace of God, bothe of synne and of payne. And certes oones a yer atte lest way it is laweful to be houselyd, for sothely oones a yer alle thinges in the erthe renovelen.

DE TERTIA PARTE PENITENTIÆ.

Now have I told of verray confessioun, that is the secounde partye of penitence. The thridde partye of penitence is satisfaccioun, and that stondith generally in almesdede and bodily peyne. Now ben ther *thre maner* of almesdede; contricioun of herte, where a man offereth himself to God; the secounde is, to have pité of the defaute

of his neighebor; the thridde is, in *yeving of* good counseil and comfort, gostly and bodily, where men han neede, and namely in sustenaunce of mennes foode. And take keep that a man hath neede of *thise thinges generaly, he hath nede of fode, of* clothing, and *of* herberwe, he hath *neede of* charitable counseil and visityng in prisoun and malady, and sepulture of his dede body. And if thou may not visite the needeful with thy persone, visite by thy message and by thy yiftes. These ben general almesses or werkes of charité, of hem that han temporal riches or discrecioun in counselynge. Of these werkes schalt thou hieren at the day of doom.

This almes schalt thou doon of thin oughne propur thinges, and hastily, and prively if thou maist; but natheles, if thou maist not do it prively, thou schalt nought forbere to do almes, though men se it, so that it be nought don for thank of the world, but oonly for thonk of Jhesu Crist. For, as witnessith seint Mathewe, c° v^to^, a cite may not ben hid that is set on a mountayn, ne non *men* lighten not a lanterne and put it under a buisschel, but men sette it on a candel-stikke, to lighte the men in the hous; right so schal youre light lighten biforn men, that *they* may se youre goode werkes, and glorifien youre Fader that is in heven.

Now as to speke of bodily peyne, it is in prayere, in wakinges, in fastynges, in vertuous techinges. Of orisouns ye schul understonde, that orisouns or prayeres, is for to seyn, a pitous wil of herte, that redressith it in God, and expressith it by word out-ward, to *remowe* harmes, and

to have thinges espirituel and durable, and som tyme temporel thinges. Of whiche orisouns, certes in the orisoun of the Pater-noster hath oure Lord Jhesu Crist enclosed most thinges. Certis it is privileged of thre thinges in his dignité, for whiche it is more digne than any other prayer; for Jhesu Crist himself maked it; and it is schort, for it schulde be cond the more lightly, and for to withholde it the more esily in herte, and helpe himselfe the oftere with this orisoun, and for a man schulde be the lasse wery to say it, and for a man may not excuse him to lerne it, it is so schort and so easy; and for it comprehendith in itself alle goode prayeres. The exposicioun of this holy praier, that is so excellent and so digne, I bitake to these maystres of theology, save thus moche wol I sayn, whan thou prayest that God schulde foryive the thy gultes as thou foryivest hem that they gulten to the, be ful wel war that thou be not out of charité. This holy orisoun amenisith eek venial synne, and therfore it appendith specially to penitence.

This praier moste be trewely sayd, and in verray faith, and that men praye to God ordinatly, discretly, and devoutly; and alway a man schulde putte his wille to be subject to the wille of God. This orisoun moste eek be sayd with greet humblesse and ful pure, *and* honestly, and nought to the annoyaunce of eny man or womman. It most eek be continued with the werkis of charité. Hit avaylith agayns the vices of the soule; *for*, as seith seint Jerom, by fastyng ben saved the vices *of flessh, and by prayere the vices of the soule.*

After this thou schalt understonde, that bodily peyne stant in wakyng. For Jhesu Crist saith, wakith and prayeth, that ye ne entre not into temptacioun. Ye schul understonde also, that fastynge stont in thre thinges, in forbering of bodily mete and drink, and in forberyng of worldly jolité, and in forbering of worldly synne; this is to sayn, that a man schal kepe him fro dedly synne in al that he may.

And thou schalt understonde eek, that God ordeynede fastyng, and to fastyng appurteynen foure thinges: largesce to pover folk, gladnes of hert espirituel: not to ben angry ne annoyed ne grucche for he fastith; and also resonable hour for to ete by mesure, that is to sayn, a man schulde not ete in untyme, ne sitte the lenger at his mele, for he fastith.

Thanne schal thou understonde, that bodily peyne stant in discipline, or teching, by word, or by writyng, or by ensample. Also in weryng *of* heires or of stamyn or of haberjeouns on her naked fleisch for Cristes sake, and suche maner penaunce; but ware the wel that such maner penaunce of thyn fleissh make nought thin herte bitter or angry, or anoyed of thiself; for better is to cast away thin hayre than for to caste away the swetnes of oure Lord Jhesu Crist. And therfore seith seint Poule, clothe yow, as thay that ben chosen of God in herte, of misericorde, debonaireté, sufferaunce, and such maner of clothing, of the which Jhesu Crist is more appayed than of haires or of hauberkis.

Than is discipline eek in knokkyng on the brest,

in scourgyng with yerdes, in knelynges, in tribulaciouns, in suffring paciently wronges that ben doon to him and eek in pacient sufferaunce of maledies, or lesyng of worldly catel, or of wif, or of child, or of othir frendes.

Thanne schalt thou understonde whiche thinges destourben penaunce, and this is in foure thinges; that is drede, schame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperacioun. And for to speke first of drede, for which he weneth that he may suffre no penaunce, ther agayns is remedye for to thinke that bodily penaunce is but schort and litel at the regard of the peyne of helle, that is *so* cruel and so long, that it lastith withouten ende.

Now agains the schame that a man hath to schryve him, and namely these ypocrites, that wolde be holde so parfyt that thay have no neede to schryve hem; agayns that schame schulde a man thinke, that by way of resoun he that hath not ben aschamed to do foule thinges, certis him oughte not be aschamed to doon faire thinges and goode thinges, and that is confessioun. *A* man scholde eek thinke, that God seeth *and knoweth*, alle thy thoughtes, and thy werkes; to him may no thing be hyd ne covered. Men schulde eek remembre hem of the schame that is to come at the day of doom, to hem that ben nought penitent and schriven in this present lif; for alle the creatures in heven *and* in erthe, and in helle, schuln seen apertly al that *they* hydith in this world.

Now for to speke of hem that ben so negligent

and slowe to schryve hem; *it* stant in tuo maneres. That oon is, that he hopith for to lyve longe, and for to purchace moche riches for his delyt, and thanne he wol schrive him; and, as he saith, he may, as him semith, tymely y-nough come to schrifte; another is, of the surquidrie that he hath in Cristes mercy. Agains the firste vice, he schal thinke that oure lif is in no sikernesse, and eek that al the riches in this world ben in adventure, and passen as a schadowe on the wal; and, as saith seint Gregory, that it apperteyneth to the grete rightwisnes of God, that never schal the peyne stynte of hem, that never wolde withdrawe hem fro synne her thankes, but ay continue in synne; for thilke perpetuel wille to doon synne schul thay have perpetuel peyne.

Wanhope is in tuo maneres. The firste wanhope is, in the mercy of Crist; that other is, that thay thinke thay mighte nought longe persever in goodnesse. The firste wanhope cometh of that he demyth that he *hath* synned so highly and so ofte, and so longe layn in synne, that he schal not be saved. Certis ayens that cursed wanhope schulde he thenke, that the passioun of Jhesu Crist is more strong for to unbynde, than synne is strong for to bynde. Agains the secounde wanhope he schal thinke, that als ofte as he fallith, he may arise agayn by penitence; and though he never so longe have leyn in synne, the mercy of Crist is alway redy to resceyve him to mercy. Agains the wanhope that he demeth *or* he thinketh he schulde not longe persevere in goodnesse, he schal

thinke that the febles of the devel may no thing doon, but men wol suffre him; and eek he schal have strengthe of the help of God, and of al holy chirche, and of the proteccioun of aungels, if him list.

Thanne schal men understonde, what is the fruyt of penaunce; and after the word of Jhesu Crist, hit is the endeles blisse of heven, ther joye hath no contrarieté of wo ne of penaunce ne grevance; ther alle harmes ben passed of this present lif; ther as is the sikernesse fro the peyne of helle; *ther as is the blisfulle companie that rejoysen hem evermore everych of otheres joye; there as the body of man, that whilom was foule and derk, is more clere than the sonne;* ther as the body of man that whilom was seek and frel, feble *and mortal,* is immortal, and so strong and so hool, that ther may no thing empeire it; ther nys neyther honger, ne thurst, ne colde, but every soule replenisched with the sight of the parfyt knowyng of God. This blisful regne may men purchace by poverté espirituel, and the glorie by lowenes, the plenté of joye by hunger and thurst, and reste by travaile, and the lif by deth and mortificacioun of synne; *to thilke lyf he us brynge, that boughte us with his precious blode. Amen.*

PRECES DE CHAUCERES.

Now pray I to yow alle that heren this litel tretis or reden it, that if ther be any thing in it that liketh hem, that therof thay may thanke oure Lord Jhesu Crist, of whom procedith alle witte and al

goodnes; and if ther be eny thing that displesith hem, I pray hem that thay arette it to the defaute of myn unconnyng, and not to my wille, that wolde fayn have sayd better if I hadde connyng; for the book saith, al that is writen for oure doctrine is writen, and that is myn entent. *Wher*fore I biseke yow mekely for the mercy of God that ye praye for me, that God have mercy on me and foryeve me my giltes, and nameliche of my translaciouns and endityng in worldly vanitees, whiche I revoke in my retraccioun, as is the book of Troyles, the book also of Fame, the book of twenty-five Ladies, the book of the Duchesses, the book of seint Valentines day and of the Parliment of briddes, the Tales of Caunturbury, alle thilke that sounen into synne, the book of the Leo, and many other bokes, if thay were in my mynde or remembraunce, and many a song and many a leccherous lay, of the whiche Crist for his grete mercy foryive me the synnes. But of the translacioun of Boce de consolacioun, and other bokes of consolacioun and of legend of lyves of seints, and Omelies, and moralitees, and of devocioun, that thanke I oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and his moder, and alle the seintes in heven, bisekyng hem that thay fro hennysforth unto my lyves ende sende me grace to biwayle my gultes, and to studien to the savacioun of my soule, and graunte me grace and space of verray repentaunce, penitence, confessioun, and satisfaccioun, to don in this present lif, thurgh the benigne grace of him, that is king of kynges and prest of alle prestis, that bought us with his precious blood of

his hert, so that I moote be oon of hem at the day of doom that schal be saved; *qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen.*

END OF VOL. III.

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